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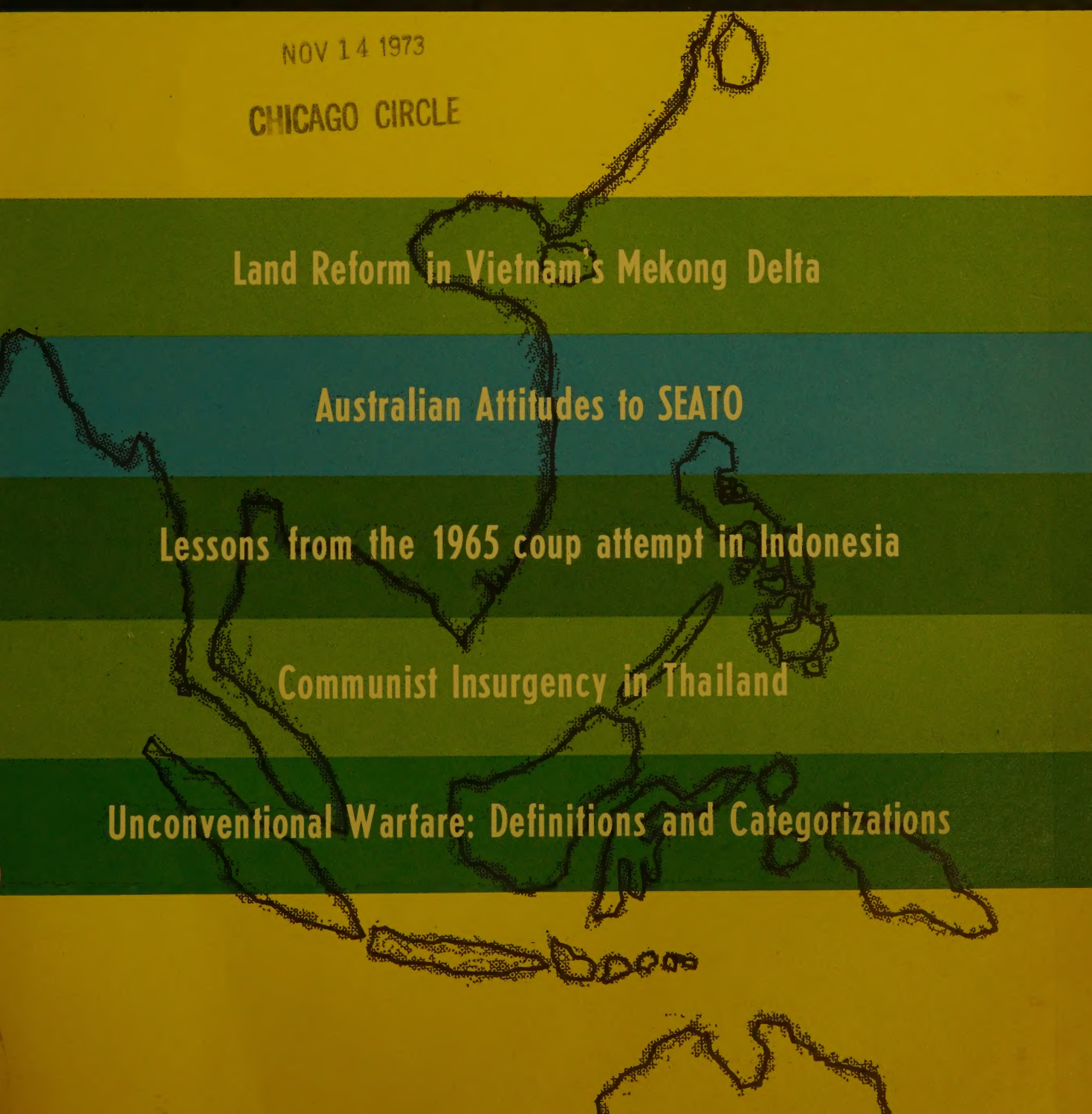

Land Reform in Vietnam's Mekong Delta

Australian Attitudes to SEATO

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Communist Insurgency in Thailand

Unconventional Warfare: Definitions and Categorizations

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LAND REFORM: After only three years' operations, with ownership of over a million hectares of land transferred to the former peasant tenants, South Vietnam's Land-to-the-Tiller programme is effecting a more profound social revolution than - that promised in the programme of the National Liberation Front.

Land Reform in Vietnam's Mekong Delta

Richard H. Eney

IN an agricultural economy like that of South Vietnam, the most important single factor in political and economic development is the pattern of land tenure. Farmers who own their land have a stake in society and tend to support a government which recognizes and protects their rights. Tenants, especially when working for absentee landlords, have no such personal interest in the overall health of society; and they are more susceptible to propaganda from insurgents, who can seek their support by promising land ownership.

The prevalence of tenant farming in less developed countries has often been cited as one of the major contributory causes of unrest and insurgency. When South Vietnam's current "Land to the Tiller" (LTTT) Law[1] was signed on 26 March 1970, roughly three-fifths of the rice-land in the country was farmed by tenants— 1.3 million of a total of 2.2 million hectares.

The usual arrangement was for a tenant-farmer to manage and cultivate a plot of one or two hectares and pay a rent, in secure areas, of up to half his crop. The landlord normally had no reciprocal obligation, and provided no seed, credit, farm equipment, or marketing outlets. The Viet Cong (VC) recognized the potential of this situation. They "redistributed" lands in areas under their control, providing beneficiaries with a personal and direct stake in opposing pacification efforts. Meanwhile, the Communists characterized the Government of South Vietnam as run by and for the landlords.

The Government of South Vietnam (GVN) was aware that some relief for tenants was a requirement of justice and a political necessity. Limited efforts toward land reform had been going on since 1956. Under the early programmes government-held land—expropriated from the French and from large Vietnamese landholders—was distributed at low prices. But the sale of land, however low the price, meant that only the more prosperous tenants could take advantage of the offer. Moreover the purchase of land might involve moving to new locations, which peasants are generally reluctant to do. While these programmes (Ordinance 57 and French Land Act) were not total failures, by mid-1970 they had secured distribution of only 76,733 titles in the Mekong Delta (LTTT had passed that mark by the end of its first full year of operation). These earlier measures have since been consolidated within the LTTT programme to simplify administration.

The first public hint of a GVN re-examination of the land reform issue was made obliquely by President Thieu in September 1968, when he promised that farmers in newly pacified areas would not be evicted and would receive title to the land they had been farming. This reassurance was a part of the preparation for the Accelerated Pacification Campaign of late 1968, which forced the exhausted Viet Cong from wide areas of Vietnam

and left the Communist side of the war openly to the Hanoi regime. Later this "tenancy freeze" was extended to all farmlands and finally, in March 1969, a rent remission went into effect. The net result was that, before the Land to the Tiller law began to be debated, no tenant could be expelled from his holdings and no rent could legally be collected by the landlords.

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THE Land to the Tiller law was signed by President Thieu on 26 March 1970. (This date has since been made a national holiday, "Farmers' Day".) After several drafts the Implementation Decree was signed by the Prime Minister on 5 June.

With a rapid series of moves the Government of South Vietnam now began to put the plan into effect. As of mid-June landlords were required to declare their holdings for purposes of compensation or retention. On 22 June training began for 4,000 village-level officials at the National Training Centre, Vung Tau. (This included 2,000 of the Rural Development Cadre, reassigned to this programme as Village Land Registrars.) Land distribution began in mid-July with the establishment of twenty pilot villages in various delta provinces. GVN inspectors, accompanied by US technical specialists, assisted the regular village-level staff in processing applications for ownership and declarations for land retention or compensation. It was not, however, until the completion of the training sessions at Vung Tau, on 20 October, that the programme got fully under way in all provinces.

The Land to the Tiller law contains several features that are new to Vietnam and which offer possible advantages for other countries desiring to press for major land reforms. They are especially applicable to states with massive requirements, poor records, or both.

The primary emphasis of the law is the abolition of tenancy, not its alleviation. Under previous legislation, the Vietnamese allowed landlords to keep land cultivated by tenants in addition to what they farmed themselves; the new law allows no retention of tenant lands except for certain religious purposes.

By providing that land ownership be transferred to the cultivator, the LTTT law for the first time recognizes the rights of squatters and even of farmers "appointed" by the Viet Cong. (The rights of such farmers, of course, derive from the fact of farming, not from any VC "land title"[2].)

The law also provides for transfer of ownership without charge to the tiller, the former landlord being compensated directly by the government. Landowners can retain up to a maximum of 15 hectares if they are cultivating it directly or with wage-labourers rather than tenant labour. For his expropriated land the landlord will receive half the value of five years' crops.[3] Payment is 20 per cent in cash and the balance in 10 per cent bonds redeemable over an eight-year period. Land communally owned by villages will also be distributed under LTTT; in this case, the payments will compensate the village for its loss of revenue.

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TWO novel technical procedures have been applied in implementing the LTTT programme: the use of aerial photographs in land identification, and the use of a computer for printing land titles and establishing a land registration system.

The Stanford Research Institute, in a 1966-67 study,[4] found that two-thirds of the villages of South Vietnam had no land records, and in those villages that did possess them the records were so out of date as to be of limited value in any land affairs programme. An adequate and complete set of records is necessary for a viable title system, whether for land reform, taxation, or simply ownership identification. The usual basis for such records is the "cadastral" map, based on the familiar surveyor's techniques for establishing property lines; but to survey South Vietnam by the conventional stake-and-transit methods would take approximately 80 years. An experiment in aerial photo-mapping in An Giang province was technically satisfactory but would have required several years and substantial finance if applied to the entire country.

Aerial photography, however, did exist for almost all of South Vietnam – the uncorrected but highly detailed photos resulting from military

reconnaissance missions. These photographs were enlarged to 1:10,000 scale and produced for every village in the lowlands of Vietnam. Each plot of land shown received an identifying number; this number, and an overlay-tracing of the plot from the photo-map, became part of the title dossier for the farmer's land. This quick and convenient solution had one disadvantage: between camera distortion and the small or irregular size of many paddies, there is a 10 per cent to 15 per cent margin of error in measuring the true area of land plots. However, the use of aerial photos allowed quick identification and redistribution of land, affording a forceful political impact for the programme. Accurate measurement of areas – a less critical requirement, since Vietnamese taxation is geared to crop value rather than area – will be a follow-up part of the LTTT programme.

Both the magnitude of the project and the paucity of existing land records pointed to the desirability of computer processing to handle title production and landlord compensation. (The computer actually imprints the separate titles and bank cheques, ready for authentication by the signature and seal of the Minister of Land Reform. A standard computer print-out device fitted with Vietnamese alphabetical characters is used.) It was hoped that management control and management information would also be improved by automatic data processing (ADP), but benefits here have been less than anticipated. The computer operation, however, has enabled the GVN to reach distribution rates of over 50,000 hectares a month in the Mekong Delta, and compensation rates of over 25,000 hectares a month. Simultaneously, land records are being re-established at the same rate at province and village levels, in addition to a country-wide central record in Saigon.

The aerial photography is largely a by-product of military reconnaissance missions, and the computer time is only a fraction of that used for Vietnamese and allied development and security activities as a whole.[5]

The number of US technical specialists assigned to advise the LTTT programme is relatively small – a village-level programme of this nature could not be directly managed by foreign specialists even if that were politically possible. In the Mekong Delta, which has responsibility for about 80 per cent of the programme, there are only three non-Vietnamese Land Reform advisors to cover 16 provinces with a population of over seven million.

Some of the tasks with which the US Land Reform personnel have assisted the Vietnamese government are:

- Training of officials on the meaning and administration of the LTTT legislation;
- Developing and disseminating publicity on the programme to the general population;
- Improving aerial photography for land identification;
- Developing improved processes to handle the flow of applications, and training in the use of automated data processing for issuing new land titles, updating land registers, compensating landlords, and monitoring the programme.

Most of this assistance is aimed at training and operational support to increase Vietnamese capabilities. However, US technical specialists have accomplished much substantive work. Current progress points to completion of most land transfer by the end of 1973. When this major effort is completed, the present transfer rate of about 350,000 hectares per year will drop to 30,000-40,000 hectares, and requirements for certain highly technical specialities will decline.

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THE scope and radical nature of this programme have generated a number of special problems, both in the programme itself and in follow-up requirements.

Considering the level of violence in Vietnam, open resistance to the law was considerably less than anticipated. There were a few spectacular cases: some tenants' huts burned down, Land Reform cadres threatened, or efforts made to seize possession of expropriated land. These, however, took place only during the early part of the programme – 1971 – and subsided quickly because the Vietnamese government reacted forcibly and made examples of such open violators by imprisonment, forfeiture or fines, and in the case of military personnel reassignment to less desirable posts.

Direct opposition having been quashed, however, the resistance switched to chicanery – far more difficult to deal with.

The chief means employed are exploitation of the "worship land" allowance and false labour contracts. Land worked by wage labour or dedicated to the Cult of the Ancestors is partly exempt from expropriation. False labour contracts assert that tenant farmers are actually wage labourers. This allows retention of up to 15 hectares, but the fraud requires that the tenant be deceived into confirming the landlord's claim.

More frequent is the manoevre of claiming an allowance of 5 hectares for "worship land". Several hundred cases of apparently false "worship land" claims – concentrated in the most secure parts of the delta – are now before the courts, with many other complaints awaiting action. Compared to the total size of the programme (over 850,000 claims for more than one million hectares) some hundreds of cases of attempted fraud affecting 3,000-4,000 hectares have limited statistical or operational significance. The legal and political implications of these violations rather than their scope justify the special attention focussed on these cases.

Problems of a different type arose when landlords applied for compensation for expropriated lands. Most intricate, perhaps, was the difficulty of establishing whose land was expropriated. Most of the villages in South Vietnam had not maintained land records systematically since the fall of Diem in 1963, and some had not kept them since the beginning of the Viet Cong insurgency in 1956. Of those which did, some had their records destroyed by enemy action. (As legal documents, land records were kept in the place most secure from casual loss, the village office. Naturally this was also the one place the Communists would be sure to destroy when they wished to make an attack look specially impressive.) While this situation did not interfere with land distribution since the new titles replace the old ones, it created immense difficulties for the former landlords in proving ownership and substantiating claims for compensation. In fact, although the GVN has created procedures for checking and confirming claims, relatively few landlords without records have so far completed the necessary formalities to obtain compensation.

Where land titles could be established, nearly half of them were found to be in the names of owners now dead. South Vietnam, like many countries with a low per capita income, depended heavily on transaction taxes, including heavy inheritance taxes. It transpired that a common tax evasion was for the titular owner's descendants simply to divide the old property among themselves, without going to a probate court or even registering the change in ownership with the village officials. This complication proved easy to handle by an established Vietnamese procedure of making out compensation in such cases to "the estate of Nguyen van X", for the family to collect after probate.

Because there were relatively few landlords, compensation problems were not first perceived as serious, but the popular reaction proved to be more unfavourable than had been expected. Investigation showed that the planners had misjudged the social attitudes involved. Absentee landlords are perhaps "outsiders", but the average landlord holds about eight hectares and lives in the District – and often, in the Village – where his land is located.

In consequence rural Vietnamese do not see social differences in the rigid class-warfare terms of Marxism, but regard small landlords as fellow farmers, a little luckier than most, but still people who have to bend their backs and dirty their hands in the paddies, "just like Us". Failure to compensate them was accordingly seen as "Them" victimizing "some of Us", and a special effort fortunately highly successful – was needed to get the computerized compensation programme functioning promptly.

* * * * * *

COMMUNIST efforts to resist or disrupt the programme have been surprisingly feeble. Fewer than half a dozen instances of VC destruction of Vietnamese land titles or efforts to replace them with Communist "titles" have come to light, and these have been reported as elements of harassment-terrorism campaigns aimed at driving settlers away from Communist infiltration routes rather than strictly anti-Land-Reform gambits. (Reportedly, in Binh Dinh province the Viet Cong

tried to preempt credit by having the local Communist authorities countersign the GVN land titles.) Propaganda has been largely limited to standardized denunciations of "Yankee-Thieu schemes".

Defectors have explained that developing a counter-campaign has been extremely difficult for the Communists because of the wide popularity of the Land to the Tiller programme among the Vietnamese farmers. Bui Cong Tuong, in service with the Viet Minh and Viet Cong since 1945, provided testimony on the immediate impact of this programme when he defected in September 1970. He had been for ten years a member of the Senior Province Party Committee in Kien Hoa Province, once considered by the VC as their best example of a "liberated area". Tuong cited the land reform programme as an important factor in his decision to change sides:

"We had no answer to the government's land distribution programme. Because of it, the people would no longer believe us. We talked land reform and we did divide up land belonging to people who fled from the areas we controlled and assigned it to landless poor farmers. But we never gave them deeds to the land and we could always take it away.[6]

"When the government's programme got under way, the old people argued with us, pointing out how much better off the farmers were who were given land in the (Government-) pacified areas. We couldn't give them satisfactory answers because they could see for themselves. Actually the government programme is much more revolutionary in a social sense than the programme of the Liberation Front."

* * * * * *

IN checking the LTTT problems the Vietnamese Inspectorate Corps and the technical specialists have been greatly aided by the unusual willingness of rural Vietnamese to complain about irregularities in the programme. The latter have used a wide variety of channels to seek redress. Complaints have been voiced to GVN officials and foreign specialists personally, brought to government attention by private organizations, and publicized by letters in the Press. This willingness has unearthed problems which the regular programme controls[7] have been unable to uncover, allowing LTTT to be monitored more thoroughly than most aid programmes in Vietnam.

(Support from the Vietnamese Tenant Farmers' Union, a branch of the Vietnamese Conferation of Labour [CVT] has varied from province to province. The organization is a loose and decentralized one. In some provinces it is chiefly effective as a buyers' co-operative or is not active at all. In other provinces it has actively collected or even investigated complaints, and in one case, early in the programme, it had LTTT application forms privately printed when official supplies ran short.)

Of the as yet unresolved problems facing Land Reform in the Mekong Delta, probably the most challenging will be to establish guidelines for the resettlement of at least 125,000 hectares of abandoned rice land. The Four-Year Pacification and Development plan vests responsibility with the provinces for establishing provincial resettlement programmes, but guidance at national government level will be required to deal with the legal problem of "secondary recipients"—that is applicants who are not yet tillers. This issue must be resolved to allow establishment of refugees and returnees on vacant land. Present practice is to require resettlers on uncultivated land to commence cultivation, making them eligible, as "tillers", for land. This legalistic device is effective for small groups, but is insufficient to deal with large-scale resettlement.

Management of the LTTT programme has proved extremely difficult because of wide monthly fluctuations in reported land distribution—ranging, in the delta, from 9,000 hectares a month to 56,000 hectares a month. Since the computer is used to produce the title documents, it is easily programmed to produce and classify detailed village-by-village reports of monthly activity. It is simple to identify villages which are falling behind schedule and to take corrective measures or at least to analyse local conditions to account for slowdowns. But in practice fluctuations have continued unabated. Although a seasonal fluctuation over the whole region can be discerned, at village level the variations are difficult to explain or even to confirm because of erratic local statistical reporting.

This problem has been complicated by a progressive deterioration in the computerized reporting at Saigon. Towards the end of 1972 there appeared to be a six to eight week delay between actual and reported distribution as increasingly heavy data-processing burdens overloaded the computer. Reports became almost useless for management purposes at just the time when the most accurate analysis was necessary for the third-year push to attain a total distribution of a million hectares.

The establishment of a readily available and responsive grievance procedure remains a critical need. The GVN is demonstrating an ability to handle the technical aspects of land reform, but the political objectives of the law can be defeated by Government acceptance of illegal declarations, by forcing changed land tenure status on tillers, by illegal taxation, bribery and corruption, and other official misconduct.

Currently, disputes and grievances are arbitrated by the Village Land Distribution Committee[8], with right of appeal to the provincial court or a "Land Court". The provincial courts are not generally conversant with modern land legislation and there are only two "Land Courts" in the Mekong Delta. Arbitration arrangements have been suggested as a temporary solution to the handling of grievances. The establishment of a complete land court system, currently under planning, will take at least two or three years.

At present the GVN response seems at least to have convinced the people of good faith. Field studies[9] find that there are plenty of complaints about LTTT provisions or administration, but that the most frequent is that the programme does not extend far enough to cover all farmland nor does it provide for landless labourers[10].

* * * * * *

ON 26 March 1973 the Land to the Tiller programme celebrated its third anniversary by passing the million-hectare mark in titles in print (that is, applied for, approved, and legally transferred; just over four-fifths of these had been placed in the hands of the new owners.)

The impact of the programme is already plainly visible, especially in the Mekong Delta, the most extensively cultivated region of Vietnam. Despite the short time that "Land to the Tiller" has been working (three years is barely enough to average out the annual variations) improvement has been substantial; and, more important politically, the public identifies land reform as the most important cause of this improvement.

The changes are not mere indicator-trends detectable in economic statistics, but major alterations obvious on even casual inspection. The average farm family, which had been paying a rental of 25-50 per cent of production for the mere use of the land, now has a corresponding increase in disposable income. The income thus "shifted downward" is estimated at 8,000-13,000 million Vietnamese piasters (US $17-27 million) per year; and most of this increment can be realized in cash, affording the farmer greater flexibility in using or saving his income than he ever had before.

The volume of farm and farm associated lending has also increased, and its emphasis has shifted from agrobusinesses and special-purpose loans for government-promoted activities to loans for individual farmers acting on their own initiative. The rate of repayment, over 90 per cent, shows that the loans are being handled on a businesslike basis, implying that they fulfil a real social and economic need and are not merely artefacts of government policy[11].

This increased cash flow is being used largely for investment in consumer durables or production inputs and equipment, such as fertilizer, insecticide, animal feeds, tractors and rototillers, small power tools, and better houses built with permanent materials (brick, cement, tile). Non-agricultural commerce is being attracted into the countryside. There are more and better quality shops offering a wider variety of goods and services. Ground transportation has increased in scale and in the provision of services.

The increase in available money and the patterns of investment have a special significance when considered together. The Vietnamese practice is to hold resources in cash or convertible form when future prospects are ominous or doubtful; major Communist offensives produce a run on the banks and a jump on the gold/currency black market. People in the countryside today,

however, are building or renovating more houses, establishing small industries, and providing themselves with more agricultural machinery. All of these are high-cost, long-term investments in anticipation of a free flow of goods into and out of the farming communities. By the very nature of their spending activities the farmers of Vietnam are showing, more clearly than verbal declarations can, that they anticipate a prosperous and stable future within the non-Communist world.

Several other GVN foreign-aided programmes have been promoting mechanization, high-technology farming, and better town-country communication. However, careful study[12] has established that acceptance of these improvements is greater in villages which also show the best performance in the LTTT programme (moreover the villagers perceive this connexion).

The changes rated as improvement by the farmers are: better living conditions (73 per cent cite these), equality and particularly freedom from petty oppression (34 per cent), and an increased sense that the national government is responding to popular desires (30 per cent). Among the reasons farmers give to explain these changes, LTTT stands out as the major single reason (cited by 68 per cent)—ahead even of increased security (67 per cent) and far ahead of the other main causes, Vietnam's general economic improvement (32 per cent) and the introduction of better farming practices (20 per cent)[13].

(Important though LTTT is, however, to assign this much credit exceeds the most optimistic objective assessment. It is likely that the *concept* of Land to the Tiller so gratifies the Vietnamese peasant that he attributes to the programme more benefits than it could possibly have accomplished directly. This is consistent with the findings of earlier surveys which showed that land ownership and farm prosperity were more intensely felt aspirations than security, even in 1966-67 when security was critical.)

* * * * * *

ALTHOUGH the LTTT programme was designed as a long-range political project, economic benefits have been immediate and substantial. Their new tenure security has given the farmers greater incentive to make long-term improvements[14].

The establishment of a pattern of small independent farms is a probable result of introducing land reform measures in other non-Communist South-East Asian countries. In some cases this is advanced as an objection, in that, by fragmenting land holdings, legislation like the LTTT law could hamper future agricultural development.

But, as applied in the LTTT, there is no fragmentation of cultivation patterns. Titles are issued to current tillers according to the existing cultivation patterns. It is likely that the resulting diffusion of ownership will militate against the consolidation of holdings, and properly so—farmers will now have to agree before their fields can be absorbed into *latifundia.* Vietnam may well avoid the illusory development which occurs when peasant holdings are consolidated and the previous tenants or farm labourers migrate to overcrowded cities where job opportunities are few. The objection to multiplying small independent farms is based on a false dilemma, for in fact small farms are not inconsistent with advanced agriculture. The huge farms of the United States and Canada produce the highest output per man, but it is countries like the Republic of China (ROC) and Japan, with small farms, which have the world's highest agricultural output per hectare.

Easily cultivated land is scarcer than labour in Vietnam and throughout most of South-East Asia. It is, therefore, the ROC and Japanese pattern that South Vietnam should seek to follow for the next generation, and the success of the Land to the Tiller law has established an economically sound as well as politically astute basis for this line of development.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. GVN Law 003/70.
2. VC land allocations were often informal. In some cases papers were made out, but were generally permits from the local Communist organization allowing the farmer to cultivate a certain plot of land rather than granting ownership.
3. More exactly, two and a half times the average yield, at the average price of paddy, based on the five-year period 1965-69.
4. Bredo, Shreve et al., *Land Reform in Viet Nam* (SRI Project IU–6797, 1968).
5. The development and security programmes in Vietnam make extensive use of computer and ADP time. Computerization would be a more difficult problem in other countries. On the other hand, the initial work done in the Vietnam programme will simplify development of a computer system for land reform elsewhere.
6. As previously noted, Communist "land titles" were really work permits. No deeds (papers granting ownership) were ever given out, either by the Viet Cong in the South, or by the Hanoi regime during the land reform programme in North Vietnam.
7. The normal programme controls are effective in detecting administrative and procedural problems, but less useful for assessing public dissatisfaction.
8. The Vietnamese "village" *(Xa)* is the smallest administrative division, with an elective chief and council and taxation powers. It is composed of two to seven hamlets *(ap)*, which correspond to a "village" in most other countries (i.e. a contiguous populated area). The Village Land Distribution Committee is composed of the Village Chief, representatives from the Village Council, and representatives of the parties to the dispute, with the Land Reform and Agriculture Cadre attached as a technical advisor.
9. H. Bush et al., *The Impact of the Land to the Tiller Program in the Mekong Delta* (Control Data Corporation [CDC], 1972).
10. This view, detailed in H. Bush et al (*op. cit.*), is shared by the non-propertied who would benefit (27 per cent) and those already owning land (15 per cent). Vietnamese show a good deal of sympathy for one another–tillers for landlords, as previously noted; landowners for the landless; and (as established by earlier studies) civilians for soldiers when they perceive the latter as being unjustly overlooked in the distribution of land. Such attitudes reinforce the observation that the Vietnamese have not accepted the class-warfare model of society.
11. When the Vietnamese Government's National Agricultural Credit Organization was making loans on a "soft" basis during 1963-66 the rate of repayment was about 20 per cent.
12. Especially the CDC analysis *(op. cit.)*.
13. Since respondents could mention any number of changes and causes, the percentages do not add up to 100 per cent.
14. That this incentive–and not, for example, general prosperity–is involved appears from the finding that new recipients of LTTT land make more investments than owner–operators, even though the latter enjoy a higher income and better education.

SEATO: At a time when the Australian Government is re-assessing national policy towards SEATO, Sir Alan Watt, formerly one of Australia's leading diplomatists, surveys the attitudes of Australian political parties towards South-East Asian defence since the end of the Second World War, throwing new light on the diplomacy leading to the signing of the Manila Pact in 1954. The article was completed on 1 May 1973.

Australian attitudes towards SEATO

Sir Alan Watt

IN an illuminating article on *Mutual Defence Alliances in a Changing World,* published in *Spectrum* Vol. 1, No. 2, the Secretary-General of SEATO reminded us that:

> ...Governments are...likely to act in what they conceive at the moment of decision to be their best interests. Pacts should, therefore, be looked upon not as absolute and precise commitments, but rather as expressions of intent by Governments, who do not enter into such commitments lightly.
>
> ...There is a continuing need for alliances in the rapidly changing world, but the specific organizations or agencies for mutual defence must themselves be able to adapt rapidly and meaningfully to the more permanent changes in the international circumstances....

He also expressed the opinion that many people expect too much of treaties, seeing them as contracts binding in all circumstances, whereas in truth a defence pact was necessarily a creation of circumstance, drafted according to current needs.

* * * * * *

WHAT were the circumstances in which the Manila Treaty of 1954 was drafted and ratified, as seen by the Australian Liberal-Country Party coalition government of that time?

The Australian Labor Party held office from October 1941 until December 1949, when it was defeated at federal elections by the Liberal-Country Party, under the leadership of Mr. R.G. Menzies. The new Government was avowedly anti-Communist in outlook and had promised to outlaw the Communist Party in Australia—a promise which, for constitutional reasons, it was unable to fulfil.

At the time of the elections a strike by coal miners led by Communist trade unionists had resulted in some 600,000 Australians being put out of work, with resultant dislocation of industry. This strike had forced even the Labor Party Government to take the unprecedented course of sending troops to work open-cut mines, in order to maintain some minimum supply of coal.

On the international scene, the "cold-war" was in full force. In 1948 Czechoslovakia had come under Communist control, Stalin had begun a blockade of Berlin, and the Soviet Union's Eastern European partners had been forbidden to accept Marshall Plan aid. Development of the cold-war and misuse of the Soviet veto had prevented the system of security envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations from coming into existence. NATO was formed in 1949.

In Asia, Communist insurrections had broken out in Indonesia and Malaya (1948), while in 1949 Mao Tse-tung gained control over mainland China. Before the Australian Government had been in office for little more than half-a-year, the Korean War began. Soon Australian forces were fighting not only North Korean Communist troops, armed with Russian weapons, but also Communist Chinese "volunteers".

These were the days, before the Sino-Soviet

rift, when international Communism was regarded as 'monolithic', operating under Soviet leadership. In a speech to Parliament on 5 August 1954, Mr. Menzies denied that the world was facing a mere contest between two economic systems, Capitalism and Communism. It was "desperately important", he said, "that the world should see this as a moral contest; a battle for the spirit of man". The time had come when friendly non-Communist countries must present "a common front backed by a common power." For these reasons, the Prime Minister announced, the Australian Government had decided that Australia must accept international military commitments in time of peace. This was contrary to national tradition, but the opportunity to train, equip and despatch armed forces overseas which Australia had been accorded in two World Wars was unlikely to recur.

A strong contributing factor in the Australian decision to support the creation of SEATO was the current situation in Indo-China. In a speech in Parliament on 27 October 1954, the Minister for External Affairs, Mr. R.G. Casey stated that, while the Government welcomed the Geneva Agreements of 1954 on Indo-China, Australians "must realize that the settlement greatly strengthened the position of the Communists in South-east Asia and exposed the whole area to increased danger from Communist domination." The Minister stressed that although mutual defence organizations had been formed in Europe and North-South America, and attention had been given to the defence of the Middle East, "a gap remained in South-East Asia". It was to fill this gap that the South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty had been drawn up at Manila. He invited Parliament to approve a Bill to ratify that Treaty.

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FOR a considerable time before the Manila Treaty Conference opened, Australia had been pressing its friends at the ministerial level to join in creating a mutual defence treaty, covering South-East Asia, in which the United States would be the main participant. While the Geneva Conference on Indo-China continued, however, the United Kingdom was adamantly opposed even to entering into discussions on such a subject. Prior to and during that Conference, relations between Sir Anthony Eden and John Foster Dulles deteriorated to such an extent that Churchill, accompanied by Eden, made a special visit to Washington towards the end of June 1954 to try to improve general British-American relations. After discussions with Eisenhower, a communique was issued which implied, to the great satisfaction of the Australian Government, a more flexible British attitude towards a South-East Asian Defence Pact:

> We discussed South-East Asia, and, in particular, examined the situation which would arise from the conclusion of an agreement on Indo-China. We also considered the situation which would follow from failure to reach such an agreement. We will press forward with plans for collective defence to meet either eventuality.

Subsequently an Anglo-American working party was set up to consider the problem of security in the area. A draft text of a mutual defence agreement was drawn up in Washington for discussion at Manila by official representatives of countries which accepted invitations to the conference. The more difficult points were left by the officials for discussion and decision at Ministerial level during the second stage of the Conference.

Two important issues led to much discussion at Manila. There was pressure upon the Americans, led by the Philippines delegation, to incorporate in the Treaty the NATO "formula", according to which an armed attack upon any party is considered to be an attack against them all. The Americans explained that this "formula" had led to much questioning in the U.S. Senate when ratification of the NATO Treaty was under consideration. Members of Congress were concerned that the United States might be committed automatically to war if a NATO partner was attacked, thus raising doubts as to the constitutional rights of the Senate regarding declarations of war. Eventually the Senate had reluctantly accepted the "formula", but was most unlikely to approve it once again if put forward in relation to a very different situation in the Pacific area.

The Australian Delegation not only accepted this explanation but, after close study of texts, agreed with the American argument that the differences between the NATO formula and that us-

ed in subsequent mutual defence treaties (such as ANZUS and SEATO) were greatly exaggerated. So far as the texts of the treaties themselves were concerned, as distinct from any military arrangements subsequently made between the Parties, there could be no "automatic" commitment to war in the event of - armed attack under NATO, or ANZUS or SEATO. All the treaties contained the phrase "in accordance with its constitutional processes", while the NATO Treaty specifically obliged each party, in the event of armed attack, only to take "such action as *it* deems necessary". In 1960 Sir Anthony Eden declared - that "the reason why the North Atlantic Treaty had been drafted so as to *exclude* "automatic" commitments was that the United States were constitutionally unable to commit themselves automatically to go to war".[1]

A second issue of greater difficulty was the American desire to make clear in the text of the Treaty that the obligation to "act to meet the common danger" in the event of "aggression by means of armed attack against any of the Parties" would come into force only in the event of "Communist" aggression. While the other delegations at Manila agreed that Communist aggression was the main threat, they did not want the Treaty to be regarded by countries not represented at the Conference as a mere anti-Communist alliance. It was still hoped that other Asian countries, such as India, might in the future become parties to the Treaty. If the American desire were acceded to, non-aligned countries like India would be even more reluctant to join.

Eventually a compromise was reached under which the word 'Communist' was excluded from the Treaty text, while the United States attached to the Treaty a specific reservation making it clear that any American obligation to "act" under Article IV, paragraph 1 applied only in the case of "Communist" aggression.

Several delegations other than the American were unhappy about this compromise. At one stage the Philippines delegation indicated that it would insist on attaching a similar reservation, but was over-ruled by President Magsaysay, apparently, after strong representations by Dulles.[2] The Australian delegation, too, did not like the compromise which, in theory at least, imposed upon every Party to the Treaty other than the United States wider obligations than those accepted by the United States.

The full story of the difficulties faced by the Australian delegation on this issue, and of the bold part played by Mr. Casey at Manila, only became public in 1972.[3] At Manila, Dulles was working to a tight time-table. He had allowed only three days for the Conference: on the fourth day he had engagements in Taiwan. In these circumstances the line of confidential communication between the Australian Embassy in Manila and Canberra was unable to function speedily enough.

On the last day of the Conference, Cabinet in Canberra was still insisting upon a reservation similar to the American or, at least, upon clear recognition by the other Parties that Australia could before ratification attach such a reservation if the Government so decided. In an effort to convince Cabinet that persistence in such a policy was impracticable, Casey telephoned Australia. As it so happened, the line proved to be extremely bad, and neither Casey nor the Acting Minister for External Affairs at the other end could hear one another properly. Casey understood that he had been given authority to accept the text as it stood if in fact failure to do so would result in no Treaty at all being signed. Cabinet, on the other hand, understood that Casey had indicated he could secure acceptance of an Australian signature, accompanied by words indicating that Australia, before ratification, had the right to attach an American-style reservation.

Immediately after the telephone conversation Casey saw Dulles privately and informed the latter of his difficult situation. His diary entry for 8 September 1954, includes the following:

> Dulles was very disturbed.....Dulles said that if I signed with such a reservation...a chain reaction would result and the Treaty would not be signed today and indeed he believed that its signing might be indefinitely delayed. The whole psychological effect of unity reflected by this Conference would be lost. He said that it would be taken as "indecision" on the part of Australia and that he could not over-estimate the effect of such indecision on public and governmental opinion in the United States.....I have seldom seen him so moved.

Shortly afterwards, the Conference re-assembl-

ed to sign the Treaty. Casey thereupon signed without reservation, although he added a few explanatory words which had no legal significance. The text was then telegraphed to the world at large through Press channels.

When the text reached Australia, Menzies was taken aback. He thought Casey had disobeyed instructions and cabled for an immediate explanation. The Minister for External Affairs was instructed to re-open the issue at the Conference. This was quite impossible. Dulles had already left for Taiwan, and other delegates were about to leave. To try to re-open the matter would not only have been futile, but would also have had a most damaging effect upon the international impact made by the Treaty. Casey drafted a long telegram in reply explaining why he had had to act as he did. He then proceeded on a planned world tour. Shortly afterwards I, as the chief official adviser in the Australian delegation, was recalled to Australia for consultation.

In discussions with the Prime Minister and others, I was able to establish that there had been misunderstanding in Canberra as to what Casey had said on the telephone, because he had asked me to stand by him during the conversation. Menzies' attitude changed when he realized there had been no deliberate breach of Cabinet instructions. Eventually he decided that a Bill should be presented to Parliament authorizing ratification of the existing text of SEATO, but including a preamble which, in describing the purposes of the treaty, stressed opposition to "Communist" aggression.

Further, in his speech of 27 October 1954 in support of the Bill, Casey claimed that "resistance to Communism is the immediate objective of the Treaty and it is for this principal purpose that the Australian Government is prepared to commit itself to this Treaty. In fact, we cannot at present see any other circumstances in which we would be obliged to intervene". Earlier in his speech the Minister for External Affairs had made it clear that the Australian Government would never regard itself as being committed to military action against any other member of the Commonwealth of Nations, as the Foreign Minister of Pakistan had been informed at Manila before signature.

The Australian Labor Party did not formally oppose ratification by Australia of the SEATO Treaty, but was critical of its contents and accepted it reluctantly. The leader of the Party, Dr. H.V. Evatt, strongly attacked the Government's acceptance of treaty obligations wider than those of the United States, and objected to the reference to Communism in the preamble of the enabling Bill which seemed to make the Treaty a "manifesto against Communism." He pointed out that these words in the preamble were irrelevant and of no binding effect. Under the treaty Australia's obligation was to act against any kind of aggression by means of armed attack, whether it was Communist, Fascist or nationalist aggression. In any event, he asked, who was to judge whether a particular aggression alleged to have occurred was "Communist" aggression?

It was part of Evatt's argument that a treaty directed solely against "Communist" aggression would be contrary to the Charter of the United Nations. He maintained that regional arrangements must be consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter, and that they must therefore be concerned only with the "maintenance of international peace and security" in the region. Nevertheless, he added:

> The security of Australia depends upon absolute co-operation with the United States in these matters. That is the reason why, in the end, an agreement of this kind must be accepted from a practical point of view even though it has its weaknesses and is an experiment in some respects.

During the debate, the Labor Party moved two amendments to the Bill. These would have prevented the Government ratifying the Treaty unless the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the United States also ratified, or from contributing armed forces under the Treaty without the prior approval of Parliament. The amendments were defeated on a Party vote.

In subsequent years the Menzies Government contributed a battalion of combat troops to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in Malaya which were used in operations against Communist "terrorists" in that territory. Australian forces were also made available to assist British and Malaysian forces in resisting President Sukarno's

"confrontation" of Malaysia; while Australian advisers and later three battalions of combat troops, together with air and naval forces, were sent to Vietnam when the United States became similarly involved in support of the Republic of Vietnam. No very clear indication was given by the Australian Government when these decisions were taken as to whether action was being taken under the Manila Treaty, or under ANZUS, or under separate arrangements with Commonwealth countries.

In 1962, however, when Thailand was disturbed at developments in Laos, Australia responded to the invitation of the Thai Government and joined with the United States and Great Britain in sending air squadrons to Thailand. The United States also sent ground forces, while New Zealand sent some parachute troops. Justification for these moves was found in the joint statement which had been issued by Dean Rusk and Thanat Khoman on 6 March 1962, claiming that the obligation of the United States to assist Thailand in the event of Communist aggression did not depend upon the prior agreement of all other Parties to SEATO, since the Manila Treaty obligations were "individual as well as collective". Two days later Sir Garfield Barwick, then Australian Minister for External Affairs, quoted the Rusk-Thanat statement in full in answer to a question in Parliament. He then added:

> Although the SEATO Treaty envisages collective resistance to aggression, each Party agrees under Art. IV (1) that, in the event of armed attack in the Treaty area against any of the Parties...it will act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. It is therefore plain, as the Secretary of State said, that the treaty obligation is individual as well as collective. The Treaty provides the basis for collective action by the signatories and much detailed planning has been done in an effort to make such action effective. However, it is a matter for each of the partners individually to determine in advance or at the time the precise manner in which it carries out the obligations which it has accepted. Of course, in making its decisions, the Australian Government will take into account the consultation and planning within the SEATO organization and the action which other members are prepared to take, collectively or individually, but at the appropriate time will decide itself how it will perform its obligations under the Treaty.

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SINCE the developments recounted above, the international scene has "suffered a sea-change". Two events of outstanding importance have altered drastically the background circumstances against which Parties to SEATO will judge the extent to which they are prepared to carry out their obligations under the Manila Treaty.

First, the Sino-Soviet dispute has reached an intensity which no one could have predicted in the 1950s. The People's Republic of China is fast developing its nuclear weapons capacity, more, it would seem, as a deterrent to Russian than American pressure or encroachment. No one speaks any longer of "monolithic Communism". While the Soviet Union and the United States remain, at least in the nuclear sense, the only two Super-Powers, the bi-polar world is fast becoming a multi-polar world. Communist China, having emerged from the throes of the Cultural Revolution, is playing an active part in the United Nations and on the international scene generally, while Japan, recovered from her early post-war prostration, has become an economic giant whose activities have world-wide significance.

Secondly, the traumatic experience of participation in the Vietnam hostilities has led to modifications in American policy which all America's friends and allies must inevitably take into serious account. The American people, or Members of Congress at the very least, no longer approve a "missionary" foreign policy likely to involve United States troops in active support of every government which has a security Treaty with the United States. President Johnston was forced to retire from political life largely because of his inability to disengage from the Vietnam imbroglio; while President Nixon was re-elected to office in 1972 largely because of the substantial reductions he had made in the numbers of American forces in that country.

Domestic problems in the United States have forced themselves to a much greater extent upon the attention of Americans—racial questions, the problems of urbanization, the dissident young, inflation, the environment, national resources. The Administration has found that the role of 'world policeman' is neither popular nor profitable, and wants to limit such a role to essentials.

Moreover, under the "Nixon doctrine" an-

nounced by the President, allies will be expected to do their utmost to help themselves. While the United States, as a nuclear Super-Power, cannot retreat into the kind of isolationism which prevailed in the period between the two World Wars, and according to the Nixon doctrine will keep her existing commitments, her probable future course of action in any particular set of circumstances has become far less predictable. Nixon's visit to Peking, arranged without prior notification to allies, shocked Japan; while in the fields of trade and finance there are serious problems to be resolved between the United States and her closest partners and friends.

In the above-mentioned circumstances any Australian government would have had to review its foreign and defence policies, so as to determine their continued relevance and adequacy. Thus, as early as 18 August ,1971 the Liberal-Country Party Government then in office announced that all Australian combat troops in Vietnam would be withdrawn by February 1972. Earlier, it had shown considerable hesitation regarding continued Australian participation in the Five-Power arrangements under which Australian forces remained in Malaya and Singapore.

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TO understand the attitude of the new Australian Labor Party Government towards overseas military involvement in general and towards SEATO in particular it is necessary to delve into the earlier history of the Party.

As a parliamentary force the Australian Labor Party grew out of the burgeoning national sentiment and the Trade Union Movements of the nineteenth century. In an article published in 1949[4] Dr. Lloyd Ross, scholar and Labor activist, pointed out that early Labor was republican in opinion. It felt that the best guarantee of national freedom from overseas political and economic influences was the defence of the working-class movement. Its left wing opposed Australian participation in Britain's wars in the Sudan and in South Africa. "Progressive democratic Australians must not be tainted by contact with effete imperialism."[5]

Opposition to conscription proposals during the First World War split the Labor Party. Australia had sent large volunteer armies overseas and lost more men killed in battle than the United States. Yet Australians rejected two referenda proposals designed to allow the federal government to conscript men to replenish heavily depleted divisions abroad. For the Labor Party, opposition to conscription became almost a test of loyalty to the movement.

Another Australian scholar, Dr. E.M. Andrews, wrote in 1965 that:

> The character and background of Australian Labor led, in the inter-war period, to isolationism. The movement's first and primary object was internal—to improve the hours, wages and conditions of the workers. Trade union officials and party members spent most of their lives, and devoted most of their thinking, to these matters, or in struggles for power within the machinery of the movement. The federal structure of Australian politics, and the distance from other centres of European civilization, also turned the Australian Labor man inwards to Australian affairs. His knowledge of, and interest in, the rest of the world was strictly limited. Foreign policy was not his concern.

According to Dr. Andrews, the movement tended to regard the rest of the capitalist world—especially Europe—as backward; "citadels of sweated conditions, long hours, poor wages and depressed workers."[6] The strong Irish Catholic element in the movement, with bitter memories of British wrongs, strengthened this prejudice against things European:

> Foreign policy was a dirty game, played by scheming European diplomats, who periodically plunged that continent...in bloodshed. Australians should have nothing to do with such matters, but should concentrate instead on building a new and more just society within their own boundaries. Labor members also shared a common heritage of "socialist" ideas....War, it was argued, was the result of economic factors—the struggle of a decaying capitalism for markets and raw materials. In such struggles workers fought and suffered. The only sane "working-class" policy was to keep out of such wars, and to continue the struggle for better conditions in one's own land.[6]

Mr. Kim Beazley, Minister for Education in the current Whitlam Government supported the isolationist charge in an article published in 1966. "The Labor Party from 1919 to 1939", he wrote,

"was frankly isolationist, strongly opposed to defence expenditure, and strangely elusive as to definite (foreign) policy."[7]

Yet in spite of this historical background, the Labor Party showed itself able, in emergency, to shoulder the heavy responsibility of trying to ensure national survival during the Second World War. Under its leader, Mr. John Curtin (a sometime pacifist), it came to power in October 1941, some two months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. The Prime Minister not only succeeded in holding the Party together during the trials and tribulations of war, but also managed to secure its support for a policy of conscription for overseas service in a limited South-West Pacific area. His exertions as a national leader during the period of greatest danger in Australian history undoubtedly contributed to his early death in 1945. Meanwhile the tireless efforts of his Minister for External Affairs, Dr. H.V. Evatt, in the international field—especially his contribution to the founding and subsequent activities of the United Nations—helped, in Mr. Beazley's words, to "drag the Party out of its isolationist mould."

However, in considering the significance and implications of the current Federal Platform of the Australian Labor Party, approved by the Commonwealth Conference in 1971, it is wise to keep in mind a warning given by Dr. Lloyd Ross in his article referred to above. Dr. Ross denied that there was a "Labor view on defence or on international affairs".

> There is never such a view. There is a collection of views held by different groups inside the Labor Movement. At the most a resolution at a union or a political conference can be said to express at that time the views of the majority present; but the minorities are not silenced, are only occasionally suppressed, an influence continues, and never does unanimity prevail on any topic.[9]

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THE 1971 Platform of the Australian Labor Party sets out a number of general principles relating to foreign policy. Isolationism as a policy is rejected; firm support is given to the United Nations and its agencies; close co-operation will be maintained with the people of the United States and New Zealand "to make the ANZUS Treaty an instrument for justice and peace and political, social and economic advancement in the Pacific area"; close relations will be sought with Commonwealth nations in South-East Asia and the Pacific and Indian Ocean areas.

In addition, the Party undertakes to co-operate in the development of South-East Asia and the Pacific and Indian Ocean areas to promote, *inter alia,* economic well-being. Initiatives will be taken to obtain regional arrangements within the United Nations Charter and to make pacts of friendship, trade, non-aggression and mutual defence with Australia's neighbours. A pledge is given to honour all Australia's treaties and alliances which respect the freedom and security of the peoples in the treaty areas and their right to determine their own forms of government without external interference.

Other paragraphs in the section dealing with foreign affairs cover the following points:

- Papua-New Guinea: increased financial assistance is promised; a defence treaty with Papua-New Guinea will be sought.
- International aid: The United Nations objective of a national contribution of one per cent of GNP is accepted.
- Disengagement: "Labor will seek to end all foreign military presence in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East and West Germany."
- Bases and facilities: Labor opposes foreign-owned, -controlled, or -operated bases and facilities in Australian territory, especially if they derogate from Australian sovereignty. This does not exclude use of such facilities by allies in war-time or when Australia is threatened, provided Australia is not involved in hostilities without her consent. Accredited Australians should have access to such facilities.
- "Australian forces should not be committed overseas except subject to clear and public international agreements."
- "Labor opposes any form of segregation or discrimination on the ground of colour, race, sex, creed or politics and will insist on ending every form of such discrimina-

> tion within Australia....It supports action, including sanctions, through the United Nations to end such segregation or discrimination."

In the section dealing with defence, the platform clearly lays down that "all forces should be made up of volunteers and conscription as such shall be abolished. In the national interest, however, the right must be retained to raise a national service force should the security of Australia be threatened."

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AT a Press conference held shortly after the federal election last December, the new Labor Party Prime Minsiter, Mr. Gough Whitlam, gave the following broad outline of the attitude of his Government towards foreign affairs:

> The general direction of my thinking is towards a more independent stance in international affairs, an Australia which will be less militarily oriented and not open to suggestions of racism.

The significance of this statement can best be understood by a summary of the steps taken by the Government to put these general principles into practice.

National service has been abolished, and the last Australian military forces in Vietnam—a small group of advisers—withdrawn. Diplomatic relations have been established with the People's Republic of China (the Australian Embassy on Taiwan has been closed) and with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. When President Nixon sanctioned renewed heavy bombing of Hanoi prior to the eventual signature of a cease-fire agreement, Mr. Whitlam sent a strong protest to Washington. Some of his Ministers criticised the bombing publicly in terms which are understood to have caused resentment in Washington.

Australia has played a major part in efforts to deter the French Government from carrying out further nuclear bomb tests in the Pacific. Representations have also been made in Peking through the new Australian Embassy there against further Chinese nuclear tests in the atmosphere.

The degree of future Australian participation in the Five-Power arrangements in regard to Malaysia and Singapore is still somewhat obscure. In his election policy speech, Mr. Whitlam stated that, pending "neutralization" of the South-East Asian area, the Labor Party would honour these arrangements which, however, did not require an Australian garrison in Singapore. The battalion and battery there would not be replaced when they completed their tour of duty. Some support troops, apparently, will be left in Singapore, but the precise number is not yet clear. Apparently the two squadrons of the Royal Australian Air Force will remain at Butterworth in Malaysia until 1975.

In a speech to the Australian Institute of Political Science on 27 January 1973, the Prime Minister described the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) as "anachronistic". He stressed the importance of close Australian relations with Indonesia, as also with the member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), whose proposal for a zone of peace and neutrality in South-East Asia he endorsed. Regional co-operation, he said, would be one of the keystones of Australia's foreign policy for the 'seventies:

> We shall be charting a new course with less emphasis on military pacts. It will be based on an independent outlook in foreign affairs, and will be directed towards a new regional community geared to the realities of the 'seventies. The guidelines of the regional community...will be an organization genuinely representative of the region, without ideological overtones, conceived as an initiative to insulate the region against ideological interference from the great powers.

So far there has been no detailed clarification as to the proposed membership of this "regional community", partly perhaps, because the members of ASEAN in general and Indonesia in particular have shown no enthusiasm for the proposal, except as a somewhat vague and long-term objective. The members of ASEAN do not wish it to be merged into some wider organization, including Great Powers, who might dominate it; they prefer to expand ASEAN slowly by including other Small Powers in the region, if these are willing to join.

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FINALLY, what inferences can be drawn from the picture painted above as to the attitude of the Australian Labor Government towards SEATO?

As mentioned earlier, the Labor Party did not oppose ratification of the Manila Treaty, but accepted it with reluctance. An Australian historian has commented that:

> ...as the party leadership moved to the left, from 1955 onwards, there was increasing Labor hostility to this commitment. It was alleged by some academic and other Australian critics that the military action provided for might well be taken against what were really Asian nationalist movements declared by the Americans to be Communist. As the 'fifties lengthened, growing Labor doubts about SEATO formed one ground for the Party's opposition to involvement in the American military activity in Vietnam in the 'sixties.[10]

In 1963 Mr. Arthur Calwell, then Leader of the Party, declared that SEATO should be "re-planned on a cultural, educational, medical and technical assistance basis and not on a military basis", and that it "should include all the peoples of South-East Asia".[11] During a television interview on 2 October 1972, before the federal elections, when he was still Leader of the Opposition and thus unburdened by the responsibilities of government, Mr. Whitlam described SEATO as "moribund". Asked whether he would "take our people out of Bangkok", he replied: "No, but frankly one would not give very much emphasis to SEATO."

Reviewing the public indications to date of Labor's foreign policy as a whole, the outside observer is inclined to draw the following conclusion SEATO is now regarded by the Australian Government as 'anachronistic', when focussed against the background of the withdrawal of Pakistan, the lack of active participation by France, the withdrawal of American ground forces from Vietnam and the unlikelihood of their being engaged in similar operations in South-East Asia in the foreseeable future. For all these reasons the Australian Government would probably prefer SEATO to lapse, or to be converted into a non-military organization, or to merge into a wider "regional community" without military overtones.

Note:

In his first general review for Parliament of Australian foreign policy, delivered in the House of Representatives on 24 May 1973, the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. Gough Whitlam, made the following points specially relevant to this article:

- "The maintenance of our alliance with the United States under ANZUS remains most important for our security." Continuance of the Treaty is not questioned by any of of its partners.
- "We believe . . . that SEATO – conceived as an instrument for the containment of China in the Cold War era – must be modified if it is not to become completely moribund."
- In the defence field, Australia will seek co-operation with its regional neighbours, on an informal basis, in such areas as technical aid, training assistance, joint exercises and continuing consultation.
- Australia's pledge to uphold the five-power arrangements (regarding Malaysia and Singapore) does not require the stationing of forces abroad on permanent garrison duty.
- "Isolationism is not an option for Australia."
- ". . . we do not seek membership of the non-aligned group."
- As a long-term project, Australia supports the creation of a "regional community which would be an organization genuinely representative of the region, without ideological overtones, conceived as an initiative to help free the region of great power rivalries." However, the Australian Government is "completely flexible on the timing, structure and membership of any future arrangements." The strength of ASEAN as a sub-regional grouping has been demonstrated. It is not Australia's intention "to disturb the unity, progress and harmony of that association."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Anthony Eden, *Full Circle* (Cassell, London, 1960), p. 43.
2. See R.G. Casey, *Australian Foreign Minister* (Collins, London, 1972), p. 184.
3. See *Ibid.*, pp. 183-5, and Alan Watt, *Australian Diplomat* (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1972), pp. 221-5.
4. See extracts published in W.J. Hudson (Editor), *Towards a Foreign Policy, 1914-41* (Cassell Australia, Melbourne, 1967). pp. 118-21.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 124-25.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
10. Fred Alexander, *Australia since Federation* (Nelson Australia, Melbourne, 1967), p. 211.
11. Arthur Calwell, *Labor's Role in Modern Society* (Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1963), p. 181.

SUKARNO'S INDONESIA: Cordial relations with China, and a legitimized Communist Party at home, did not prevent a Communist coup attempt in Indonesia in 1965. Moreover, the attempted coup illustrated the potential for Communist exploitation of conflicts within the Armed Forces in developing countries.

Lessons from the 1965 coup attempt in Indonesia

Justus M. van der Kroef

AS is generally known, on the night of 30 September to 1 October 1965, leaders of the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia – PKI*) and members of its youth and front organizations, along with dissident officers and units of the Indonesian Army and Air Force, staged an abortive coup d'etat in Djakarta and parts of Central Java. Though all but suppressed within forty-eight hours (scattered fighting in Central Java continued for several days) the coup attempt, commonly called by Indonesians the *Gestapu* affair (from *Gerakan Tiga Pulu September* or "Thirty September Movement") has been a major turning point in Indonesia's national history, eventually demolishing much of the PKI's growing power, initiating the accelerating political decline of then President Sukarno, and bringing about significant new departures in Indonesia's foreign relations. While over the years some aspects of *Gestapu* and its origins have remained controversial,[1] (a few academic commentators insisting with more zeal than scholarship, for example, that the PKI was largely and somehow unwittingly lured into participating in the coup by Army plotters) other features are sufficiently distinct to permit conclusions about its possibly exemplary significance for insurgent and subversive movements elsewhere in the South-East Asian region and even beyond. The lessons of *Gestapu* can be fruitfully studied by anyone concerned with the political and tactical dimensions of counter-insurgency.

The first and perhaps most important lesson concerns the *timing* of *Gestapu* and to understand this aspect of the matter it is necessary first to go back briefly into the history of the PKI. Founded in May 1920 and the oldest Communist Party in Asia, the PKI after a period of intense proselytizing among the budding Indonesian trade union movement, and winning some influence also among the Javanese rural proletariat, particularly plantation workers, and the small peasants, staged a quickly quelled uprising in north-west Java and Western Sumatra in 1926-27. This first insurrection in PKI history, like the ones that followed in later years, seems in retrospect to have been poorly planned and quite ill-conceived, with some key Party leaders opposing the whole idea of a coup altogether. Extensive arrests of Party cadres and suspected sympathizers, and intensified application of the Dutch colonial regime's domestic security authority, limited the PKI to scattered and furtive underground activity from which it was not to emerge fully until after the Japanese occupation of Indonesia (1942-1945).

And yet, rashly precipitate as the 1926-27 coup attempt undoubtedly was in many ways (particularly in light of the tactical dissension within the Party, the realities of colonial police powers, and the as yet limited impact of the modern politicization process on the mass of Indonesians), it cannot be said that Communist leaders were wholly without justification in staging their insurrection. During and since the First World War more militant and radical brands of nationalism had acquired increasing vogue in Indonesia, one dimension of

which, the rise of the organized labour movement, had provided the PKI with an especially useful recruiting ground. Despite their organizational weaknesses, and their quarrels with the Comintern, PKI leaders knew themselves to be riding the winds of change: "By 1925", one specialist has written, "the Dutch authorities had become sufficiently alarmed at the Communist success to conclude that the PKI and its sympathizers must be rendered inactive at all costs".[2] Among Party followers and beyond, expectation of an uprising on 1 May 1926 had been widespread for months, and "the tension became unbearable in the areas where the PKI was most active....."[3] Certainly PKI histories of the 1926-27 uprising picture it not so much as an isolated Communist outburst but rather – and with some justification – as an important early manifestation of a wide-based national movement against Dutch colonialism.[4]

The last point is perhaps worth stressing because of similarities with the PKI's later coup attempts. Communist instigated uprisings in Indonesia, whatever the faultless judgement of hindsight, were not perceived by Party leaders at the time as desperate gambles but rather, one would almost say, as logical culminations of a broad radicalizing momentum, which (rightly or wrongly) was considered to reflect also the state (or much of it) of mass opinion. Thus its coup attempts have been expressions of the PKI's relative sense of strength, not of its weakness and, one should add, a strength not so much reflected in the size of the party *per se*, but more in its influence or its popular image. - It is, so to speak, the degree of the Party's public legitimacy and acceptability (among Indonesians, not Dutch!) that is the criterion to be considered here. The failure of this and subsequent coup attempts only induced the Party to be more careful next time in strengthening that influence before - attempting another seizure of power.

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THIS pattern appeared to be repeated in the immediate post-Second World War period as Indonesians successfully fought the returning colonial Dutch for their independence (1945-49). Legitimized shortly after Indonesia's independence proclamation (17 August 1945), the PKI soon became an increasingly more powerful factor in the domestic politics of the fledgling Indonesian Republic, having, like other ideological groups, its own "people's army" corps. In the course of 1947-48, for example, a sharply increased PKI –, front –, and crypto-front group representation in the revolutionary Indonesian Republic's embryo parliament, the formation of the Indonesian cabinet of Amir Sjarifuddin (who subsequently identified himself as a PKI member), and the establishment of a radical left coalition of parties and trade unions, the "People's Democratic Front" *(Front Demokrasi Rakjat)*, dominated by the PKI and with important allies in the revolutionary army, – all these testified to the sudden and often startling new upsurge of Communist power.[5] But this PKI ascendancy also increased the determination of the Party's enemies, and tensions heightened as armed clashes between Communists and their Muslim and other opponents increased. Meanwhile, the arrival of the veteran PKI leader Muso and the reorganization of the PKI executive presaged an acceleration of the Communist offensive.

Again one may quarrel whether or not the subsequent coup attempt of some PKI leaders and units in the East Java city of Madiun on 18 September 1948, showed nothing so much as the Party's and its front complex's weakness. The point is that, once more, the coup attempt came at a time when the PKI's relative integration with the domestic Indonesian political establishment, along with public support for or, at the very least, generally accepted recognition of its legitimate role in national life had gone farther than at any other time in its history. The Madiun episode was conceived by those who initiated it (again, as in 1926-27, some Party leaders were opposed to a coup), as an expression of Party strength in the context of the Indonesian Republic's political establishment of the time – it was, then, not a daring foray of outlaws.

The failure of the Madiun coup in time demonstrated yet once more the Party's Phoenix-like propensities: never formally outlawed, the PKI, under new leaders dominated by the young Sumatran Dipa N. Aidit, within five years of the Madiun coup had returned to a new legitimacy and rising influence. Amidst provincial unrest and aggressive national economic and foreign policies

President Sukarno's authoritarian "Guided Democracy" system seemed to turn increasingly toward the USSR and, later, toward People's China for support, and the new multi-million member PKI and front organizational complex emerged, along with the Armed Forces and the President himself, as one of the principal three power centres in Indonesia. As the Communists extensively integrated their ideology with that of Sukarno's own official political doctrines, and leaned heavily on the President in their unrelenting power struggle with the Army, some unwary observers in the late 1950s and early 1960s were inclined to view the Party as having become "domesticated". Others, apparently taking seriously Aidit's own assertion (made at the PKI Sixth National Congress in Djakarta on 16 September 1959) that "if you want to find coup-ists don't look for them within the Communist Party of Indonesia but look for them elsewhere", apparently believed that the Party had now abandoned the path of violence and was expecting to achieve dominance through a kind of maturing national censensus or process of "acclamation".

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THE fact is that the legitimacy and influence which the PKI enjoyed by 1965 – once again greater and seemingly more secure than at any other time in its history up to that time – was by no means incompatible with a simultaneously accelerating campaign of rising political militancy and pressure, intimidation of and periodically even violent clashes with its opponents, all in keeping with the Party's official dictum that "the offensive means success and victory, the defence means failure and defeat".[6] Already at the close of 1964 aggressive Party plans for the next year, including preparation for a coup, had leaked out. And despite, or perhaps even because of, this publicity, by the middle of 1965, principal PKI Politburo members, including Party chairman Aidit, were deeply involved with a few dissident Army officers in organizing a new coup attempt.[7] True to pattern these preparations occurred again in a context of official and public acceptance of the lawful place and role of the Communists in the Indonesian political establishment. Indeed, although through its aggressive tactics it had polarized its opposition (as in 1948), the PKI in 1965 was considered, certainly in any formal sense, to be even more an integral part of that establishment than at any time in its history, its leaders now even having been admitted to lesser cabinet posts. And if the Party had learned anything from its experiences in 1948 it seemed to be still more "respectable" and officially entrenched before engaging in another test of strength with the very establishment in which it had now "peaceably' won such a significant place. As in the past, also, there were some Party leaders who were sceptical of the desirability of a coup. But, again in accordance with the history of previous PKI coup attempts, there is no indication that this hesitation delayed the final decision to seize power.

Indeed, the whole tenor of Aidit's public utterances in the months before the coup is that of a confident revolutionary militancy preparing to do final battle. Typical were his remarks to a peasant cadres' training course in Bogor, West Java, on 3 April 1965. Recently, Aidit said, "a modern revisionist" had been arguing with him that it was more important to have factories than "spirit". Spirit and "street demonstrations" were unimportant when compared to carrying forward production. Aidit said that he had repudiated this argument: without spirit Socialist factories would soon become Capitalist factories. Therefore, Aidit went on, "we should keep our revolutionary spirit like the Vietnamese people". Today in Indonesia, he added, public policies were being made by "the people" demonstrating in the streets, people taking a stand against U.S. films and against American plants and other foreign enterprises. The "revolutionary situation" in Indonesia, the PKI chairman concluded, had therefore become very favourable. In such a situation the best way for the Party would be to launch a "revolutionary offensive" for only in that direction lay daily success.[8]

There seems little doubt that Aidit and other PKI leaders took the radicalizing effect on the Indonesian masses of the Party's "revolutionary offensive" to be both extensive and profound. Indeed, they almost certainly took this effect – the fruit of the PKI's months-long agitational campaign on behalf of land reform, and against Western "imperialist" economic interests and cultural influences in Indonesia – to have laid the

necessary groundwork for another coup. As it turned out they assumed too much in this regard, as their predecessors in 1926-27 and 1948 had also done. Even so, the *Gestapu* affair, like other previously attempted Communist power seizures, was not a last or sudden strike of the despairing, but a calculated power-play made by seasoned and highly influential politicians who – not without some, but, as events proved, still with insufficient justification – thought they had mass support at their beck and call.

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THE present era knows of instances in which Communists, in parliamentary fashion, have come to power (Kerala, West Bengal), though not on a national level (unless the controversial Allende regime in Chile be so considered). Given the Army's opposition it would have been difficult, though not inherently impossible for the PKI similarly to have won control of the government democratically. General elections had not been held since 1955, but the Party was making some headway with its demand that they be held again and soon. Moreover the PKI could count on Sukarno's support and in the meantime it was steadily penetrating the armed forces establishment, winning sympathizers especially among lower naval personnel in "Red" Surabaya, in the marine corps (*Korps Komando Operasi* KKO) and among Air Force officers. The trial in 1972 of Air Force Colonel Sudiono, one-time Air Force Director of Intelligence, on charges of complicity in the *Gestapu* movement, in effect, revealed a "PKI network" in the Indonesian Air Force which, even years after the coup attempt, protected guilty officers from exposure and prosecution.[9]

Thus Communist strength, though as in 1948 arousing strong opposition, was more than holding its own in the months before *Gestapu*. Ostensibly, Aidit, in just a few days, in early August 1965 committed himself and units of his Party to the *Gestapu* plot because of recent reports of Sukarno's illness, which made it necessary to forestall an Army pre-emptive coup if the President died.[10] The fact is, of course, that for years now the hard-living Sukarno had, at frequent intervals, been rumoured to be in very bad health – only to recover again and again. And so it was to be this time: a Sukarno reported to be virtually at death's door in early August 1965 appeared quite well again two weeks later. He was in fact not to die until 21 June 1970. That an experienced political infighter like Aidit would really have been persuaded, on such short notice, by as questionable a cause as Sukarno's health to commit his destiny to a coup is not only unlikely but also flies in the face of previously noted evidence of earlier PKI plans for a coup, known since the end of 1964, and of the existence of the PKI's so-called "Special Bureau" (*Biro Chusus*) established since November 1964 directly under Aidit to influence and win a following among military officers.[11] In short, PKI planning for another coup ante-dates and, indeed, is independent of any single event or crisis such as Sukarno's reported illness, and must be seen instead in the context of what one might almost call customary Indonesian Communist practice: *the likelihood of a PKI coup increases in proportion that the Party is legitimized by and integrated with the Indonesian political establishment.*

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HISTORY never need repeat itself. But if the preceding analysis of the timing of *Gestapu* has any value, then its practical implications are clear. With the emergence of a new post-Vietnam war order in Asia, with slow but inexorable moves toward a normalization of relations between Djakarta and Peking, with an expected strengthening, too, of continuing Soviet-Indonesian ties, pressures to legitimize the PKI once again are likely to rise, particularly so if domestic dissatisfaction (for whatever cause) with the Suharto regime eventually becomes more prominent. It may well seem risibly premature to raise at this time the spectre of a formal (as opposed to covert and underground) PKI return to the Indonesian political scene. Yet the question may well have to be faced a lot sooner than is now anticipated. When the matter does arise, and a presumably rehabilitated and "non-coupist" PKI again enters the Indonesian constitutional system, who will then remember that one lesson to be learned from *Gestapu*, particularly when the latter is viewed in the light of Party history, is that the Party is likely to be most dangerous when it appears to have

become most fully integrated with the legitimate Indonesian political establishment and political culture?

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BUT in the *Gestapu* incident the PKI did not function alone. A second lesson of the 30 September 1965 coup is that the allies of the Communist plotters came precisely from that segment of the power structure most generally described as Party opponents, i.e. the Indonesian armed forces, particularly the Army. Pre-*Gestapu* generalizations about Indonesian politics so habitually have tended to cast the Communists and the Army in antithetical positions, that the fact that the coup rested upon their collaboration, or, more exactly, upon the collaboration of *some* Army and other military officers with *some* top Party leaders, came as a surprise to many observers.

It should not have done so. There had long been various conflicts in the Army's officer corps. The reasons are complex. Some involve personal and generational rivalries; others touched on broader questions of Army reorganization, upgrading of personnel qualifications, the utilization of technical service specialities and staff controls; while still others were frankly ideological. The last cause of conflicts reflects the problem of the Indonesian Army, and the extent to which the military, since the revolution, have become closely involved in virtually every aspect of the political and public administrative decision-making process in the country. Throughout its history the national Indonesian army has been plagued by ideological dissident officers, some of whom, as in the later 1950s, chose the path of open insurrection against the Djakarta Government. However badly PKI leaders may have miscalculated the extent of potential mass support for their *Gestapu* coup attempt, they had justification for assuming that a number of subaltern and field grade officers, in the Army as well as the Air Force, and for some time now under the influence of the Party's previously named *Biro Chusus*, constituted a "progressive" element that would back the Party's ambitions. Some, though not all, of these military "progressives" were covert but functional Communists and under the Party's discipline. Most had vaguely radical leanings, accentuated by distrust of and dissatisfaction with the policies and relatively opulent life-styles of a few top Army commanders.

The extent to which the *Biro Chusus* created, or merely augmented, the group of "progressive" officers is difficult to say. Nor is it easy to trace the origin of the idea that the "progressives" needed to initiate or join a coup to forestall a supposed plot to seize power by the senior Army commanders. Testimony in the trial of prominent PKI leaders, like that of Politburo member Rewang, in December 1971, suggests that Aidit and other Party executives decided to *join* the "progressive" officers to pre-empt a strike by "reactionary" generals.[12] Who joined whom then, and who first planted the much disputed story that there was a generals' "plot", cannot now be determined with certainty. Since the very role of the *Biro Chusus* was to act as provocateur, one can hardly dismiss the possibility that the story of the generals' "plot" was, in fact, planted by the PKI itself to win support from Army radicals for a Communist coup attempt already decided upon as the natural culmination of Aidit's "revolutionary offensive".

That question is, in any case, not a vital one, What is important is the existence of the "progressive" officers group itself as an ally of Communist coup plotters. Few hard data exist on the military aspects of the national political cultures in South-East Asia today, although a good deal more is known about Indonesia in this respect than the other countries of the region. Family, class and other social strata origins, levels of education and religious or other ideological differences – about these dimensions of South-East Asian officers' corps little or nothing has been published. But it would be surprising if the internal military conflict pattern of the Indonesian case is wholly unrepresentative. Direct or indirect political involvement of the military is, of course, by no means uniform in the region: in Thailand, South Vietnam or Indonesia it is much more extensive than in Malaysia or Singapore, with the Philippines and Burma ranking somewhere in between. The point is that the politicization of the armed forces can seriously augment other existing intra-military conflicts and provide a significant

avenue of ideological radicalization that will be skilfully utilized by the Communist Party or its fronts. Latin America, specifically Peru, in recent years has offered examples that can hardly be ignored by the rest of the Third World.

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A third lesson to be learned from the *Gestapu* affair is the role of People's China in it. Despite the evidence this is, for many Western observers of the Indonesian scene, perhaps the most difficult lesson of all, in part, one supposes, because of the new euphoria in attitudes toward People's China resulting from an improvement in the relations between Peking and Washington. Yet, reports published in Thai and Malaysian papers weeks *before* the coup that the Chinese Communists were covertly supplying arms to the Indonesian Communists in preparation for the latter's reported forthcoming "show-down" with the armed forces[13], have thus far not been invalidated, and despite continuous official Indonesian accusations of Peking's involvement in *Gestapu* have never even been repudiated by any Chinese spokesman. Nor has there ever been a contradiction of the testimony in the trial of former Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio that the latter, after conversations in Peking in January 1965, had not only agreed to accept some 100,000 small arms from China, but had decided to import them into Indonesia without the knowledge of the Indonesian armed forces.[14] The Chinese small arms would be used to arm a "people's force" in Indonesia, an idea long advocated by the PKI, and also publicly supported by Peking officials, but strongly opposed by Indonesian Army commanders.

Peking's foreknowledge of, let alone complicity in, the *Gestapu* affair, may have been even more extensive than is even now supposed. In January 1972, for example, during the trial of Pono, a principal PKI participant in the *Gestapu* plot, testimony was offered by Sjam (Kamaruzaman), another major PKI plot participant, who with Pono had also played a major role in the work of the Party's *Biro Chusus*. Sjam testified that but a few days before the coup he received the text of the first decree to be issued by the *Gestapu* movement after it had seized power. Sjam received the decree from Air Force Major Sujono, also a chief *Gestapu* plotter, who in turn, according to Sjam, had received it directly from Aidit "who was at that time in Peking".[15] Assuming this testimony to be accurate, it does not seem improbable that Aidit did not leave his Chinese friends altogether in the dark as to the *Gestapu*'s planned activities. Aidit's presence in Peking, so shortly before the *Gestapu* coup itself, further tends to confirm Chinese involvement in its preparations.

Peking's link with *Gestapu* is significant not just as a dimension of Chinese Communist assistance generally to various Communist and insurgent movements now operating in South-East Asia and indeed elsewhere in the world. Such assistance is so much a part of the international scene that military planners in various countries take it – with justification – to be a matter of course. Thus, in Japan's overall national defence planning it is assumed that while potential aggression from the USSR will take the form of a conventional attack, aggression against Japan from the direction of China will take the form of an internal insurgency in Japan itself, inspired by China and utilizing a Chinese trained urban guerrilla and commando force.[16]

Rather, the real significance of the Chinese involvement in the *Gestapu* affair lies in the context of Sino-Indonesian relations at the time of the coup attempt. At the time of *Gestapu* it would be no exaggeration to say that Sukarno's Indonesia had become one of Peking's warmest friends and allies, and, particularly on the international scene, the two countries seemed to be operating almost in tandem. Yet it was precisely at this time of official cordiality that Peking moved to assist the Indonesian Communists in their coup attempt.

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ONE might add that since the *Gestapu* incident Peking has shown again that her friendly State-to-State relations with another country will not be permitted to interfere with active Chinese support for local Communist subversive movements undermining the government of that country.

Burma is another recent case in point. By August 1971, Sino-Burmese relations, which in the first half of 1967 had reached their nadir as

Chinese Embassy personnel in Rangoon incited Chinese students in the Burmese capital to stage their own version of Red Guard militancy, had sufficiently improved for General Ne Win to be able to visit Peking. Overtly "China's anxiety to demonstrate its new friendly posture toward Burma was evident from the fact that a special airplane had been sent to Rangoon to bring the Burmese Chief of State and his party to Peking".[17] Formally, diplomatic relations had returned to normal a few months previously as Chinese and Burmese ambassadors returned to their posts, and as China resumed her US$80 million assistance project to the Burmese. Yet all the while China also continued to supply the Burmese Communist insurgent forces (incorporating some dissident tribal minority group members) in their operations against the Ne Win regime and provided further training in China itself to insurgent Burmese cadres and military personnel.[18] By January 1973, as meanwhile the Chinese road-building project across Northern Laos was moving steadily closer toward the Thai border, the "Chinese-backed insurgent army" in Burma was reported to have "seized a sizeable amount of territory in North-East Burma" and to be extending its influence southward in the direction of the Lao-Thai frontier region (i.e. precisely where the Chinese-built road is likely to assume significant logistical significance for local guerrilla forces).[19] Armed with Chinese weapons, even howitzers, the Burmese Communist insurgent force may well be led in part by Chinese, because "communications among their (i.e. insurgent) leaders that have been intercepted have been in Chinese".[20] Earlier, there had already been reports, of course, of Chinese "People's Liberation Army" troops actually being on Burmese soil to aid the Burmese insurgents.[21]

It has been fashionable, notably in some American quarters, to regard all these Chinese actions as primarily "defensive", dictated, allegedly, by unfriendly pressures on China's borders. The difficulties in holding to such a view have already been expounded elsewhere.[22] Suffice it to observe here that it seems difficult to substantiate Peking's need for a "defensive" reaction against Burma, or, in the case of *Gestapu*, against Sukarno's Indonesia of 1965.

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FINALLY, something is to be learned from the reasons for *Gestapu*'s failure. First of all, the "30 September" plotters obviously expected too much from their killing of top Army commanders in Djakarta on the night of the coup. For even if General A.H. Nasution, Indonesia's senior soldier, had not escaped the assassins' hands, it seems certain that other Army commanders would have risen up to combat the coup. To forestall a counter-strike by loyal Army personnel it would have been essential for the conspirators to establish well organized political hegemony in the capital in a matter of hours. To accomplish this the *Gestapu* leaders had a hard-core stike force of about 4,000 men at their disposal in Djakarta. At least half of these were drawn from military units, such as one company of the *Tjakrabirawa* (Presidential bodyguard) regiment, elements of the first infantry brigade and Air Force security troops, and two batallions (the 454th and 530th) of paratroops. The rest, at least 2,000 and possibly more, consisted of members of PKI youth and women's front organizations who, in groups of various sizes, had secretly received weapons and training at a remote section of Halim Air Force base at Djakarta with the connivance of Air Force officers. During the previously mentioned trial of former Air Force Colonel Sudiono, testimony was presented that the training of the PKI units began as early as July 1965,[23] which, if true, would further undermine the theory that Aidit rather suddenly in early August committed the PKI to the plot because of Sukarno's illness. Yet though this *Gestapu* force, divided into three groups, had initially definite targets (e.g. occupation of major buildings, elimination of top Army leaders, providing security at the Halim base) there was little or no contingency planning in the event of resistance, no systematic attempt to mobilize PKI street support or neutralize political opposition, in conjunction with the strike-force, and no co-ordination with scattered Communist insurgents in the Javanese countryside or with sympathetic Army commanders throughout the country. In a number of rural areas Communist killer-squads did descend on villages to eliminate known or suspected opponents, but the latter, especially when under Muslim leaders, organized and struck back, eventually unleashing a massive, bloody anti-Communist holocaust.[24]

The Party's imposing multi-million member front group structure was never made an integrated part of coup plans (as, indeed, most of the regular Party members were not either) and especially beyond Java news of the coup seeped through inadequate communications channels at a time when *Gestapu* had, to all intents and purposes, already been crushed in the capital. If the "30 September" conspirators had expected swift and spontaneous support from the supposedly politically radicalized populace they were fatally mistaken: the coup attempt showed, if nothing else, that despite the impressive formal Party and front organization membership lists, the massive demonstrations and rallies which the Party could turn out, the general tenor of leftist militancy in all public policies and official statements and doctrines, the majority of the Communist human base were fair-weather friends, awaiting conclusive evidence of success before committing life and fortune to the Party in this decisive hour.

Inadequate planning had plagued previous PKI coups and it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the Party, historically, has had a fatal predilection to over-estimate the popularity of its cause. That – as in 1926-27 and 1948 – Party leaders in 1965, too, had considerable justification for believing that the political tides seemed to be running with them is undeniable. But that justification was never as great as over-optimistic confidence in the popular acquiescence in or support for the coup attempts warranted. *Biro Chusus* member Sjam (Kamaruzaman), testifying at the trial of his colleague Pono in January 1972, declared that PKI over-confidence was, in the last analysis, responsible for *Gestapu*'s failure. "We were too convinced of victory", Sjam said.[25]

It may well be too, that in the *Gestapu* affair the Communists never wanted a mass involvement in the first place, preferring to rely on an apparently inocuous alteration in the top structure of government that would not produce too great a reaction from opponents. Even so, however, the Party required a much better organizational support structure than became evident in the hours and days after the PKI killer-squads had moved out on their grisly mission on the night of 30 September 1965. Not just excessive faith in the righteousness of their cause – a not uncommon failing among ideological fanatics and one that links the leadership of previous PKI coup attempts with that of *Gestapu* – but perhaps also what may be called the "Winter Palace syndrome", i.e. the belief that a single dramatic act, such as the killing of the top Army command, would galvanize the revolutionary mass, probably doomed the *Gestapu* conspiracy to failure. Indonesia in 1965, despite its currents of political radicalism and its air of expectancy that something drastic might soon happen, was a long way from Tsarist Russia in 1917. *Gestapu* shows that the legitimacy of the PKI's political strength ultimately disposed as little against the staging of a coup as the Party's ideological fervour would be likely to assure the coup's success.

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IN the years before *Gestapu* observers of the PKI, particularly in the universities, were unanimous that the Party was unlikely to risk a new coup attempt. Hence, no qualified student of Indonesian Communism – even one aware of the Party's accelerating drive to power in the months before the 30 September incident – predicted that a new PKI seizure of power was likely. Once again historical truth exploded the neat but speculative symmetry of the academy's assessment of Indonesian political probabilities. Perhaps this is the most sobering lesson of all – but, over-pessimistically perhaps, the present writer doubts if the lesson will have been learned.

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THAILAND: Since 1961, when the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) adopted a policy of armed struggle, the Thai Government has faced a serious, foreign-supported, insurgency concentrated on the border areas. Based on information available at June 1972, the Royal Thai Government's Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) has produced a comprehensive paper on the current insurgency situation.

Communist insurgency in Thailand

Unofficial summary of the Government White Paper

THE current insurgency situation in Thailand is considered serious but not yet critical. It is serious because guerrilla units operating in the country continue to receive arms support, assistance in education and training, and other forms of aid from Communists outside the country. It is not yet critical because the Royal Thai Government has been taking appropriate measures to contain the threat.

The situation has not reached the stage where the Communists are able to gather enough support from the rural population to establish a solid foundation in Thai village communities.

Improvement of security measures and social and economic development undertaken by the Government will eventually render less likely the success of subversion in Thailand. Consequently, the Communists have now shifted to a combination of both armed struggle and subversion in the hope of ultimate success.

There is evidence of a marked increase in overt assistance and support for the Thai insurgents from the Communists outside the country through the provision of propaganda materials, pro-Communist literature and facilities for a clandestine radio station (the so-called *Voice of the People of Thailand)* which broadcasts propaganda support for the Communist Terrorists (CTs). Another serious problem confronting the Government is that Communists outside the country have been supplying the CTs with weapons and explosives since 1967, as revealed by evidence found on captured terrorists. The Vietnamese Communists have long been actively involved in providing education and training for leading cadres who have been assigned to carry out subversive and insurgent activities upon returning to Thailand. The former have set up a special school for this purpose at Hoa Binh Province in North Vietnam. In addition, adjoining border areas in Laos under the control of the Pathet Lao have been used as sanctuaries for the Communist Terrorists and as infiltration and exfiltration routes for their movements.

But it is the proscribed Communist Party of Thailand and the various Communist front organizations which are the prime instigators of the agitated situation in Thailand.

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THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN THAILAND

IN its early days, the Communist movement in Thailand involved the resident and immigrant Chinese. Between 1925 and 1927 members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) penetrated

the syndicates and associations, including workers' groupings, set up by the Kuomintang. Following the 1927 CCP/Kuomintang split, CCP members separated from the Kuomintang organizations. At the same time, the drastic purge of the CCP within China drove some members as fugitives to Thailand. The numbers of cadres in Thailand were further swelled by students returning from Europe, where they had imbibed Communist doctrine. Such organizations as the "Communist Youth of Siam" and "Marxist-Leninist Units" were set up to engage in propagating Communism and to seek members and funds to support the revolution in China.

In early 1928 the Vietnamese independence movement under Ho Chi Minh's leadership was heavily suppressed by the French, and many activists fled across the border to carry on their work among the Vietnamese in Thailand. Clandestinely, between 1931 and 1933, the "Vietnamese Communist Party"[1] moved headquarters to north-eastern Thailand, where it engaged in the propagation of the Communist doctrine and sought to broaden co-operation with the Vietnamese in the country.

Among the only ethnic Thais at that time attracted to Communism—largely as a result of the distribution of Chinese and Vietnamese leaflets—were extremist scholars who regarded themselves as "progressive".

The 1932 change-over in Thailand from absolute monarchy to constitutional government was represented in leaflets, purportedly signed by the "Communist Party of Siam" and printed in Thai, Chinese and English, as involving Communist participation. During that period three periodicals, *Satchang* (Truth), *24 Mithuna* (24 June) and *Muanchon Rai Sapda* (Mass Weekly), featured laudatory articles on the Soviet Union's economic programme. In 1934, subversive leaflets were distributed throughout the north-east, avowing, under the pseudonym of "Thai Youth", the intention of setting up a Communist form of government.

In the following years, Marxist-Leninist units were set up by the pro-Communist Chinese in, for instance, certain Chinese schools, and a number of Chinese clubs and associations. In addition, the anti-Japanese movement, then expanding from China to the Overseas Chinese, was exploited by the Communists, who gained a sufficiently wide following to set up a "Thai Chapter (branch) of the Chinese Communist Party".

During the early part of the Second World War, CCP agents entered Thailand from China and convened a meeting of Chinese Communists on 1 December 1942[2] at which a Committee was elected (comparable to a typical Central Committee of any Communist Party). Only Chinese and Vietnamese were present.

Nonetheless, the Party's name was changed to the "Thai Communist Party," with a "Thai section" under the guidance of the Party's Executive Committee, directing propaganda and organization in relation to Thai nationals of Chinese and ethnic Thai stock. This committee was later divided into Chinese and Thai "Chapters of the Party's Executive Committee".

After the Conclusion of the Second World War, in October 1946, Thailand was compelled by political circumstances to repeal the Anti-Communist Act of 1933. Able to operate openly,the Communists reorganized themselves into two separate parties: the Thai Communist Party (TCP) and the Chinese Communist Party of Thailand (CCPT).

TCP propaganda aimed to present the Party as the advocate of the policy of the government of the day. The Party weekly, *Mahachon* (Public) canvassed for membership among labourers in the Bangkok/Thon Buri metropolitan area, up-country towns and in the rural areas.

At this time the Communists exercised widespread influence over the Chinese-language Press, Chinese schools, and the Chinese community generally. Following the coup d'etat of 8 November 1947, the Thai Government embarked upon suppression of the Communists within the country, and both the TCP and the CCPT were again forced underground. With the Communist take-over of China in 1949, the CCPT dissolved itself, and a section of the Party's membership, including its leading cadres, withdrew to China. The remainder joined the TCP.

In early 1952, the Second Congress of the TCP, designated the Party the "Communist Party of

Thailand" (CPT) and formed a Central Committee. Canvassing for recruits was subsequently stepped up, by dispersing cadres from the Party headquarters to up-country and rural areas, simultaneously with the sending of Party adherents for training and indoctrination in China (1952), the setting up of training schools or centres in North Vietnam (1962), and in Laos (1962), and the training provided by the Communist Terrorist Organization (CTO) in Malaysia (1966).

A "Thai Liberation Organization" was clandestinely set up by the CPT to make preparations for armed struggle. There were large-scale arrests of its members after the so-called "Peace Coup" (1952) —one of the CPT's attempts to collaborate with out-of-power politicians.

Between 1953 and 1961 the CPT expanded organizational and proselytising activities in three ways: firstly, by staying within the law, organizing such groups as temple management committees, musical bands, sports teams, tuition classes, etc.; secondly, by infiltrating government or anti-Communist organizations, such as the Welfare Fund for Railway Employees and the Thai Labour Association; and thirdly, by setting up political groups like the "Thai Liberation Organization", the Vocational Labour Union, and the Youth League of Thailand.

This enabled the CPT to infiltrate various labour and student groups as well as to influence people from other walks of life in the metropolis. In the provincial towns, the Communist movement made progress but with caution, while in the countryside it assumed a more open manner in the form of mutual labour assistance projects, all in accordance with local need and the law. Outwardly, such organizations and activities betrayed no trace of Communist instigation whatsoever. More peasants were brought into the various Communist-sponsored projects than at any other time, especially in the north east and central regions.

In this favourable situation the CPT convened its Third Congress in 1961. By then it had been approximately ten years since the first CPT members went to Communist China for indoctrination and some of the returnees had been adept enough to apply Maoist theories to solve practical problems. Prior to the convening of the Third Congress, so as to give the Party more of a Thai character, more ethnic Thai cadres had been trained. These subsequently proved capable of shouldering responsibilities for Party work and organization at various levels.

At the Third Congress, the CPT formally resolved to resort to "revolutionary armed struggle", apart from mobilizing the masses, so as to promote conditions favourable to a long and protracted war in Thailand. Since then the CPT's forces in the jungle have been armed. The "armed forces" proceeded to mobilize the masses and to give military training to personnel, but they continued to try to avoid clashes with government forces. The CPT aimed to develop its armed forces slowly, expecting to control certain areas in the northeast as strongholds from which to further its "revolution".

Mopping-up operations and large-scale arrests by the Government pushed increasing numbers of fugitive Communists further into the jungle. External assistance and support was increased and the CPT expanded operations, notably following the attendance of representatives at a conference in Peking in early 1964. In October that year, the CPT Politburo announced that it would employ its armed forces in the jungle as the Party's primary instrument and its apparatus in the cities and towns would play a support rather than a leadership role. Government forces would be attacked only where victory was assured.

During 1965 the Government inflicted heavy losses upon the CPT organization in the northeast. Yet, contrary to the Third Congress resolution to defer action until base areas had been established, the CPT decided to proceed with "armed-struggle". On 19 November 1965 the CPT announced the establishment of the "Anti-American Movement of Thailand" apparently as its "first people's armed unit", with the task of carrying out its "armed struggle" against the Thai authorities.

Besides allowing its armed forces to learn valuable practical lessons, there were other reasons for the CPT's decision to switch to armed struggle without the assurance of victory. In 1965 the world situation was in a state of flux. It was the policy of the CCP to aggravate this situation or even to create new problems, especially in conjunction with the fighting in Laos, Vietnam and

Malaysia. Should the situation in Thailand result in the assumption of power by other political groups, the armed forces of the CPT could be used to aggravate the consequences or even to carry out a take-over.

On 1 January 1969, the CPT announced the formation of a "Supreme Command" of the so-called "Thai People's Liberation Armed Forces" (TPLAF). (The date of the founding of the "Anti-American Movement of Thailand", 19 November 1965, is regarded by the CPT as the official date of the establishment of the TPLAF.)

Despite government counter-measures, and not inconsiderable losses, the CPT has been enabled by continuing external support to expand its organization into provinces outside north-east Thailand. There have been CT/government forces clashes in Surat Thani (southern region), Prachuap Khiri Khan, Phetchaburi and Ratchaburi (central region), Nan, Chiang Rai and Tak (northern region).

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NATURE OF THE SO – CALLED "LIBERATION"

THE Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) and foreign Communist Parties supporting it have tried to claim that the insurgency in Thailand is a "War of National Liberation". But the ultimate objective of this insurgency is, simply: the conquest of Thailand by force. Complementary to this, the Communists have been carrying out political subversion against existing institutions. They have resorted mainly to deception, terrorism, vengeance, coercion and assassination.

The Communists employ all means at their disposal to obstruct government programmes aimed at improving the welfare of the Thai people, particularly in the remote areas. Their immediate aim is to convince the people that the Government is neither capable of nor interested in improving living conditions. Many diligent and selfless officials, working on development efforts, have fallen victim to Communist-perpetrated crimes. They have included administrative officials, health workers, teachers, village leaders and volunteer defence teams. The following are examples of crimes committed by the CTs under the banner of "Liberation":

18 October 1967, Lahan Sai District, Buri Ram Province: Mr. Sirin Chanthahakun, Public Health official of Lahan Sai and his two assistants were shot and killed by CTs while travelling to Khok Suk Samran village to administer vaccinations and to examine leprosy patients.

22 February 1971, Wang Sa District, Surat Thani Province: Five CTs shot and killed Mr. Komon Khimthong, B.A. (Education), a teacher at "Muang-Huai-Nai-Khao" School, who was involved in rural education and village development, and Miss Rattana Sakunthai, an instructor at Chulalongkorn and Silpakorn Universities, who was collecting information for her report on a "Teachers' Training Project", at Khuan Charun village.

29 March 1971, Thung Chang District, Nan Province: An unknown number of CTs ambushed 2 APCs carrying a military security team and Highway Department personnel on the road between Pon and Kiu Chan villages. The APCs were hit by B-40 rockets. Ten soldiers were killed and five wounded. Two officials of the Highway Department were also killed and four wounded.

2 May 1971, Mukdahan District, Nakhon Phanom Province: Approximately 20 CTs attacked and set fire to two tractors belonging to the Office of Accelerated Rural Development operating in the area north of Chom Mani village. The CTs prevented the workers at gun-point from extinguishing the fire. The tractors were extensively damaged.

Captured documents reveal Communist plots to harm or to assassinate government officials and leading individuals. Terrorist killings, armed propaganda rallies, threats and other ruthless tactics are means to instil fear and create disorder in the villages. Nor are the insurgents themselves safe, and are frequently liquidated if they do not carry out these crimes to the satisfaction of their leaders.

The Communists usually resort to coercion as a means of gaining support from the villagers. Should this method fail, they adopt other means, including the abduction of village youths as hostages, so as to exact contributions of food and supplies from unwilling villagers, as well as acquiring new recruits.

* * * * * *

EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

FOUR external Communist Parties have been providing assistance to the CTs in Thailand. These are the Chinese Communist Party, the

Vietnamese Communist Party(the Lao Dong Party or the (North) Vietnam Workers' Party), the Lao Communist Party (The Lao People's Party[4]) and the Communist Party of Malaya[5].

Sanctuary and staging areas, education and training, travel facilities and help in the development of political movements have been provided. Long before insurgency occurred small groups of CPT agents were receiving political indoctrination and military training outside the country. Foreign Communist Parties have either violated Thai territory in establishing sanctuaries for guerrilla units or conducting recruitment and training of new members, or infiltrated personnel into Thailand to assist the CPT-led insurgent movement.

Chinese Communists

Personalities and organizations in the People's Republic of China (PRC) have been actively instigating subversion and insurgency in Thailand. *Radio Peking,* a propaganda medium of the Chinese Government, and the so-called *Voice of the People of Thailand*—a clandestine radion station, believed to be located in Yunnan Province, South-West China, controlled by the Chinese Communists and unfailingly following Peking's line—have been giving solid support to CPT insurgent activities.

The Chinese have provided facilities for pro-Communist Thais living in the PRC to carry out political activities consonant with the Communist cause. They have been conducting education and training courses for CPT personnel to be infiltrated into Thailand[6] (also see below: TRAINING AND INDOCTRINATION). But even more serious is the fact that the Chinese have infiltrated their military units into the northern provinces bordering Laos to assist the CPT.[7]

The Chinese have additionally supplied the CTs with weapons, explosives, and other equipment over the past six years. In several clashes with the CTs, Thai authorities have captured a large number of Chinese-manufactured weapons and explosives.

Front Organizations: A number of subversive organizations are known to have been set up in in the late 1950s in China. These included the "Thailand People's Front", said to have been created on 18 March 1959, with two Thai expatriates as its representatives, and the "Thailand Democratic and Patriotic Movement", reportedly established during the same period, again with a Thai political exile as representative in China.

Since November 1964 PRC-controlled radio stations have announced the establishment of four anti-Thai Government political organizations, in reality created and sponsored by the Chinese Communists. The "Thailand Independence Movement" (TIM), represented in Peking by Mongkhon na Nakhon, was the first to be announced on 1 November 1964. The movement's manifesto called on the Thai people to "rise up and struggle for national salvation". The "Thailand Patriotic Front" (TPF), represented in Peking by Phayom Chulanonda was reported to have been established on 1 January 1965. Mongkhon and Phayom were political refugees living in China.

Communist media subsequently proclaimed the formation of the "Thailand Federation of Patriotic Workers" (TFPW) and the "Thailand Patriotic Youth Organization" (TPYO), on 1 May 1965 and 15 February 1966 respectively. They did not announce whether of not there were any representatives in China. However, both the TFPW and the TPYO declared that, like the TIM, they had decided to rally to the TPF, apparently as subsidiary organizations accepting its political leadership.

These organizations, as well as all the Thai expatriates in China associated with them, are believed to have had some form of contact with personnel of the Chinese "Wai-pan" office. The "Wai-pan" was reportedly organized like a semi-governmental agency with world-wide representation, and operated clandestinely in countries having no diplomatic relations with Peking. It is said to have been subdivided into many sections, covering fields such as political, military, economic, social, psychological and cultural.

In the political field, the "Wai-pan" set up a unit responsible for "united front" activities, and it is with this unit that the Thai expatriate organizations were reported to have had a close relationship. All four front organizations notably

failed to rally the support of the Thai people to the Communist cause, and from late 1967 the Chinese leadership gradually phased them out and by early 1970, all four had apparently been dropped. The PRC instead switched to direct propaganda support of the CPT.

Propaganda support: There are many instances of official Chinese propaganda support, indicating a measure of control, of the CPT.

A greetings message on 30 November 1967 from the CCP Central Committee to the CPT Central Committee on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the CPT openly promised Chinese support:

> Holding aloft the great red banner of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung's thought, the CPT has adhered to the revolutionary road of using the countryside to encircle the cities and seizing political power by force of arms.
>
> The CCP and the Chinese people firmly support the armed struggle led by the CPT. We are convinced that the CPT which is persevering in waging a people's war will certainly be able to develop and grow stronger in the struggle, unite the whole party and peoples of various nationalities throughout the country, and win final victory in the people's war.
>
> The militant friendship cemented by the Chinese and Thai parties and peoples in their protracted revolutionary struggle will certainly be further consolidated and developed in the course of their common struggle in the future.

In its message of reply, the CPT Central Committee said:

> We call on the whole party and armed forces to hold still higher the great red banner of Mao Tsetung's thought; we call on our party members, cadres and all armed fighters to study and apply more effectively the thought of Mao Tsetung. We call on the whole party and armed forces to use Mao Tsetung's thought as the guide to their work in all fields... (*Voice of the People of Thailand*, 13 December 1967).

Indirect propaganda has sometimes been employed. On 2 January 1972, *Radio Peking* broadcast in the Thai language a New Year's message of greetings purportedly sent by "instructors and students of the Thai language section of Peking University" to "all Thai comrades and friends". The unnamed Thai language instructors and students expressed their "sincere interest in the situation regarding the revolutionary struggle of Thailand". They further declared:

> Your struggles are our struggles. Your victories are our victories....we are determined to join with the entire Chinese people in giving support for the struggle of the Thai people.... Henceforth, we will endeavour to study harder and master the Thai language as quickly as possible in order to establish closer ties of friendship between the Chinese and Thai people. Let us unite in fighting against the American aggressors and their running dogs until their final defeat.

The message concluded with an exhortation to "the Thai people"—i.e. the CPT-led insurgents – to do their best to "overcome all hardships and difficulties, persevere in their struggle..... until complete victory is assured".

Vietnamese Communists

The Vietnamese Communists have long been actively engaged in providing assistance and support for the Thai insurgents, as evidenced by their establishment of a special school to conduct political indoctrination and training for CPT personnel. The school, which was called the "School of the Communist Party of Thailand", was set up in 1962 and located at Lang Mu village in Hoa Binh Province, North Vietnam. Several hundred persons from Thailand received Communist indoctrination and guerrilla warfare training at the school during a span of five years until it was destroyed by air attack some time after 1966. Reportedly, the Vietnamese Communists have resumed the training of Thai CTs at a new school, believed to be located at a village about 50 kilometres from Hanoi. A number of CPT personnel have been sent to other North Vietnamese schools.[8] (See below: TRAINING AND INDOCTRINATION).

Vietnamese Communists have also been infiltrated into Thailand to assist the CPT-led insurgency. A former Meo hilltribe insurgent, Laothao sae Ma, who gave himself up in January 1972, disclosed that between 1964 and 1966 his relatives had forced him to be a servant to North Vietnamese troops who moved across the Thai-Lao border at Thung Chang District of Nan Province to carry out armed propaganda activities among the hilltribes. Laothao said that during that period he attended two North Vietnamese

units; the first comprising 50 men arrived in 1964 and was replaced by a smaller unit of 25 in 1966.

Clandestine Vietnamese organization

The clandestine "Overseas Patriotic Vietnamese Association" (OPVA) is known to have its members operating covertly among displaced persons in Thailand. Activities in Thailand are grouped in four major areas:

Propaganda and Training:– conducts propaganda among the Vietnamese residents, stressing the prosperity and progress of North Vietnam and "victory" in the Vietnam war; exhorts the Vietnamese to listen only to *Radio Hanoi* broadcasts. Moreover, the OPVA has expanded its propaganda campaign among Thai nationals, hoping to enlist their sympathy for the "plight" of the Vietnamese displaced persons and their support for North Vietnam's "struggle", and to alienate them from the Thai Government.

–calls on the Vietnamese nationals to be more revolutionary-minded by studying propaganda materials provided by the Association and resupplied by North Vietnam.

–calls on all displaced Vietnamese and leading members of the OPVA to be self-sacrificing by following the heroic example of such persons as "Nguyen Thi Sao". On 14 February 1967, Sao was said to have sacrificed her life in an attempt to ward off the arrest of a leading OPVA member. She grappled with an official, trying to take away his gun, and was killed when the gun fired accidentally.

–conducts clandestine indoctrination of Communist youth, stressing nationalism, support for North Vietnam and Communism, worship of the late Ho Chi Minh and the present North Vietnamese leadership.

Solicitation of funds: –the practice of soliciting contributions from the Vietnamese in Thailand has always been the principal task of the OPVA. Funds collected are covertly sent as financial assistance to the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, as well as being used to cover the operating expenses of the Association and to pay the allowances of committee members, most of whom have no occupation except that pursued as a cover. The following are specific examples:

–voluntary contribution of a specified minimum amount each month.

–sale of souvenirs, such as photographs of Ho Chi Minh and North Vietnamese "heroes" or gifts and household articles made from wreckage of downed US aricraft. Prices vary from five to 200 baht (25 US cents to US$10) depending on a Vietnamese family's ability to pay.

–on the occasion of the 26th anniversary of the founding of North Vietnam (2 September 1971) commendation medals and Ho Chi Minh photographs were presented to Vietnamese residents of Mukdahan District, Nakhon Phanom Province, who had made a donation of money to the (North) Vietnam Workers' Party.

–North Vietnamese Government bonds have been sold among the Vietnamese since 19 August 1967, the 22nd anniversary of the Vietnamese Communist "August Revolution".

Espionage and sabotage: – The Vietnamese in Thailand have been directed to establish close contacts with Thai nationals, especially government officials - civil, police and military. Information on the Thai authorities and their movements is normally gathered through Vietnamese girls and shopkeepers.

The six CTs killed during sapper attacks on air bases in Udon Thani (1968) and Ubon Ratchathani (1970) in the north-east, all had pronounced Vietnamese features.

Subversive activities: – There is evidence to indicate that the displaced Vietnamese (who are located in the three northeastern border provinces of Nong Khai, Nakhon Phanom and Ubon Ratchathani) have long been working "hand in glove" with the Thai CTs. They have been providing assistance for CPT personnel who are taken to Laos or North Vietnam for indoctrination and training. The assistance includes ferrying facilities across the Mekong River and provision of shelter. In addition, ethnic Vietnamese have been identified as either leaders or advisers of several CT bands operating in north-east Thailand. Clearly, these activities are an embarrassment and inconvenience to the law-abiding members of the Vietnamese community in Thailand.

Lao Communists

Assistance and support provided by the Lao Communists are considered significant because of the areas in Laos adjoining Thailand which are under the control of the Pathet Lao (PL) – military arm of the Lao People's (Communist) Party. These areas have also served to facilitate the movement of the Chinese and Vietnamese Communists in extending assistance and support to the insurgents in Thailand.

Lao Communist aid has been in the form of sanctuary and staging areas, cross-border supplies of arms and equipment, travel facilities through Laos under PL guidance, political indoctrination and military training (see also below: TRAINING AND INDOCTRINATION) and propaganda against the Royal Thai Government.

Malayan Communist Terrorist Organization

Activities on Thai territory of the Malayan Communist forces assumed increased importance about 12 years ago, when guerrilla units of about 500 members, who had fled across the border into Thailand towards the end of the Emergency in Malaya, organized themselves into military operational units as part of the Communist Terrorist Organization (CTO). At present, it is believed that the CTO guerrillas are still under the leadership of the same man who led them out of Malaya. However, the rank-and-file members are mostly young Chinese radicals of both sexes, who have been recruited from communities and villages in the border area and given training by the CTO. Documents and photographs captured in 1967 during an assault by government forces on a CTO camp located in Betong District, Yala Province, identified the camp as a major political and military training centre. (See below: TRAINING AND INDOCTRINATION).

The overthrow of the Malaysian Government has remained the prime objective of the CTO's propaganda. Recently, however, with the forging of closer links with the CPT, CTO propaganda has denounced the Royal Thai Government and incited the Muslim Thais in the southernmost provinces to turn against the Thai authorities and join hands with the Communists. Furthermore, combined Thai-Malaysian suppression operations have met strong resistance and resulting casualties.

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COMMUNIST INFILTRATION AND SUBVERSION AMONG THE HILL-TRIBES

THE terrain in northern Thailand is largely mountainous and consists of complex mountain ranges which are extensions of those in Laos, Burma and southern China. The lowland Thais prefer to inhabit the fertile valleys, whereas most tribal groups occupy the mountains. These hilltribes migrated from Laos and Burma into Thailand less than one hundred years ago. They are largely farmers who base their livelihood on shifting cultivation. Consequently, the hilltribes move their settlements from time to time, especially when the soil fertility has been exhausted.

At present, there are approximately 500,000 tribesmen distributed throughout the rugged mountainous areas of northern Thailand. The major tribes are Karen, Meo, Yao, Lisu, Kha Mu, Htin, Lahu and Akha. The pattern of migration of these tribesmen has been one of a gradual movement of groups of interrelated families. These groups establish their own villages, which are independent and often separated from one another.

The administrative unit of the hilltribes is no larger than that of a typical village, being the natural framework of their social structure. Nevertheless, the strong adherence to relationship by marriage has provided a form of loose association among families within each tribe extending over a wide area. Some hilltribes in Thailand still maintain a feeling of close kinship with tribesmen in Laos and Burma as well as with those in southern China.

During the earlier phases of their migration, the hilltribes created no discernible problems for Thailand. They lived peacefully - often in isolated settlements - and were content with their traditional way of life. In recent times, however, the population increase of both the lowland Thai and the hilltribe communities in the northern region has created a greater demand on the limited natural resources. This, coupled with the illicit

opium-growing activities of certain tribes, has resulted in a series of social and economic problems, such as the destruction of valuable forest and headwater areas.

During the 1960s the hilltribesmen were drawn into the struggle between the Communist and non-Communist worlds. This added political and military dimensions to the problems of the hilltribes.

The factors making the hilltribes vulnerable to persuasion and incitement are their primitive social structure (each village is a small autonomous unit), the inaccessibility of their settlements and their status as ethnic minorities. The CPT has exploited these vulnerabilities as well as the social and economic problems of the hilltribes to recruit some of them as insurgents or supporters. Counter-measures are difficult because of the inaccessible terrain in which the hilltribe insurgents operate.

Communist methods of infiltration are simple and usually effective. First the Communists establish personal contact with hilltribe families, and help in daily chores, until they are trusted and looked upon as friends. Next they exploit the families' grievances, placing blame on the negligence of government officials. Subsequently the Communists suggest that insurgent activities are a means to eliminate grievances. They make promises to the hilltribes, especially concerning freedom to use the mountain land and to pursue the traditional way of life. Finally, tribesmen are lured into committing criminal acts, which become means of blackmailing them into joining the CT movement. Committed tribesmen are then used to further recruitment, resorting to acts of intimidation if necessary.

The following are some recent examples of the involvement of hilltribesmen in Communist-instigated insurgent activities:

25 January 1970 in Pua District, Nan Province: Some 20 CTs identified as Thai, Lao, Meo and Chinese surrounded Pa Rai village and extorted rice, both raw and cooked, from the villages. The CTs also induced the men to go into the jungle for training.

14 December 1970 in Thoeng District, Chiang Rai Province: Government forces successfully captured a CT camp located in the vicinity of Poe Thu Nua village. They uncovered a weapons repair shop, a medical supply store, and many items of personal equipment, such as maps, radio receivers, military uniforms (about 400 sets), and a sizeable number of Mao Tsetung badges. Also captured were various documents and some 100 film negatives. Some of the captured photographs show groups of hilltribe terrorists, both men and women, wearing Mao badges.

20 September 1971 at Chon Daen District, Phetchabun Province: Approximately 33 CTs, 29 of them Meo tribesmen and the rest Thai, surrounded Nam Khan village and conducted an armed propaganda meeting. At the same time, some of them posted anti-government leaflets to various houses in the village. Upon leaving, the CTs took with them the village headman and one of the villagers as hostages.

22 September 1971 at Nakhon Thai District, Phitsanulok Province: An unknown number of Meo CTs attacked the post of a Village Security Team at Nam Lao during the night. Three members of the team were killed and two wounded.

Being ethnic minorities and preferring freedom and isolation, the hilltribes simply desire to remain in existence. The Communist-instigated "armed struggle" has disrupted their traditional way of life and the tribesmen are consequently afraid of undue hardships and, eventually, starvation. The side that can provide security and welfare will be successful in rallying the support of the hilltribes to its cause. CT activities against legal authorities are partly a means to mislead the tribesmen into believing that the Communists are capable of providing them with protection and security.

The factors determining the outcome of Communist suppression operations are for the Government to provide adequate security measures as well as to implement social and economic programmes for the tribesmen and their families. But much of the national resources must inevitably be wasted in counter-insurgency operations, instead of being utilized for the acceleration of development programmes to raise the living standards of the entire Thai people.

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TRAINING AND INDOCTRINATION

CTs and members of Communist mass organizations are required to undergo political and military training and indoctrination. Some are sent abroad to receive further political, military and nursing instruction. A new CPT recruit, too, must undergo training and indoctrination fitting his particular background and knowledge. The Party also makes its assessment of the new recruit's ability, willingness to sacrifice, endurance of hardship, grasp of theoretical concepts, and eagerness to learn.

Training and indoctrination outside Thailand are carried out in four places:

A. **Communist China:** Between 1952 and 1967 the CPT sent about 65 members to study at the Marxist-Leninist institutions at Chungking and Peking. These trainees have since returned and taken important positions within the CPT. They have played significant roles in expanding the existing mass organizations and in providing training and education for the CTs in the jungle. Some, on completion of their courses, were selected to undertake further training or observation in other institutions or organizations, such as the Military College of the People's Liberation Army, the College of Medicine, or the College of Physical Education.

The "Liberation Volunteer Organization" (Asa Kuchat), established in China by political refugees from Thailand, also played a role. Its strength came mainly from members of half-Thai and half-Chinese parentage. After receiving considerable training these persons were sent back to Thailand, especially to the north near the Chinese border, to carry out insurgent activities. Today the organization exists in name only, but many of the CTs now operating in Thailand were once members.

B. **North Vietnam:** Between 1962 and 1966 North Vietnam provided military training and political indoctrination for 587 Thai terrorists—449 men and 138 women (the latter mainly trained in nursing).[8] Some of these are now instructors and play a leading part in the insurgency in Thailand.

C. **Laos:** Between 1962 and 1964 a school was established at Muong Sai, Luang Prabang Province, northern Laos, inside a Pathet Lao (PL) base camp. The school's director and instructors were Vietnamese; the deputy director and the interpreters were Lao. It was established for Thais, and especially for members of the hilltribes, between the ages of 15 and 35.

During 1965 and 1966 two "Anti-American Cadre Schools" were established in Muong Sai under the direction of a CPT member. The instructors were Thais and Vietnamese, while the interpreters were Meo. The schools' objective was primarily to train the Meos, although a small number of villagers from the north, north-east and central regions of Thailand also attended. Both schools were under the supervision of the CPT's "Office 30" also located at Muong Sai.

In the areas under PL control, terrorists sent from Thailand undergo training with Lao people in various camps in Vientiane, Borikhane, Xieng Khouang, Sam Neua and Phong Saly Provinces. The training sites are separate from the main compound of the camps and are run by PL soldiers, normally with Chinese Communist soldiers as advisers. Instructors are Chinese, Thais and Vietnamese.

In the PL-controlled areas in the south, between 1958 and 1966, training and indoctrination were given by the pro-Communist Pathet Lao and Vietnamese Communists. Thais were also sent there and received instruction along with the Lao people in military, political, and medical subjects in Savannakhet and Saravane Provinces. In 1967, however, the CPT established a school at Hieng village, Champassak Province, which was entirely controlled and managed by Thais.

Interrogation of former terrorists has revealed that those sent to the PL-held areas in the north received training mostly in military subjects, while those sent to the central and southern regions concentrated on politics and medicine respectively.

Military subjects included weapons study, weapons assembly and use, making explosives and other armaments for "guerrilla warfare", as well as the theory and practice of guerrilla tactics. Political subjects included Communist theories, "The Thoughts of Mao", Thai and Lao political history, and propaganda. The period of instruction varied from three months to two years.

MAP SHOWING THE ROUTES FROM THAILAND TO CHINA, NORTH VIETNAM AND LAOS TAKEN BY CPT PERSONNEL FOR THEIR INDOCTRINATION AND TRAINING

PROVINCES OF KINGDOM OF LAOS

1. Phong Saly
2. Houa Khong
3. Luang Prabang
4. Sam Neua
5. Sayaboury
6. Vientiane
7. Xieng Khouang
8. Borikhane
9. Khammouane
10. Savannakhet
11. Vapikhamthong
12. Saravane
13. Sedone
14. Attopeu
15. Champassak
16. Sithandone

Between 1962 and 1967 no fewer than 400 terrorists from Thailand received training and indoctrination in the areas controlled by the Pathet Lao.

D. **Malaysia**: The CPT sends members to study with the CTO in Malaysia.[10] Instruction is given in military topics, politics, and "Mao Tsetung's Thoughts". From 1966 to 1969, six groups of students were trained. The first five groups comprised 54 students; the number of students in the last group is unknown.

Within Thailand Communist indoctrination programmes must normally receive the approval of the CPT and must adhere to set principles – for instance, in regard to the selection of instructors, trainees and documents. Methods of indoctrination and training are revised periodically to conform to local conditions, as well as to be suited to the individual trainees.

The basic objective of CPT instruction is to train new recruits in the theory and practice of Communism, and to increase the number of active members. From these members some are selected for further instruction abroad.

Methods of indoctrination studies – including aspects of a Communist Party, struggles of the workers, guidance for the masses, politics, mass movements, and Party discipline – are:

- Self-indoctrination: a trainee reads and researches by himself, seeking advice from instructors only when he encounters difficulties in his studies.
- Group indoctrination: group lessons are held for a short period in certain subjects. Each member of the group is required to read and understand the subject well enough to take part in discussions.
- Systematic indoctrination: this requires a long period of intensive study in a number of subjects. It is similar to the programme of indoctrination at the "School of the Communist Party of Thailand" in Hoa Binh, North Vietnam, or at the Marxist-Leninist Institute in Peking.

Many of the texts used in indoctrination classes were allegedly printed by a fictitious "Saeng Sawang Publishing Office, Bangkok".

Urban indoctrination classes are conducted in clandestine places, often also used for meetings. The trainees live, eat and study together for the (usually brief) duration of the course. When indoctrination classes are to be held in rural areas, the instructors will designate the place, date and time. Such classes are given rarely and the duration of the programme varies.

In Thailand self - and group-indoctrination classes are believed to be held. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that a systematic indoctrination programme is in progress.

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COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA AGAINST THAILAND

PROPAGANDA has continuously been a key weapon in the Communist subversive strategy. It is employed to sow discord, create confusion, revile the authorities, spread false rumours, convey threats, and instil despair, in furtherance of the aims of establishing a Communist Party, mass organizations, and "armed forces".

Communist propagandists exploit existing situations in the country. For instance, during a flood they would accuse the authorities of negligent failure to devise effective preventive or relief measures. They would direct propaganda towards the disaster-affected population, particularly those in areas where government relief could not reach immediately.

Thailand's Communists began their propaganda campaign among the rice-mill labourers in the Bangkok/Thon Buri metropolitan area, later gradually spreading to labourers in other industries. After 1947, the campaign began to have an impact among staff and students in various educational institutions.

In 1952, after its Second Congress, the CPT decided to direct propaganda and mass organization activities towards the farmers, particularly in the remote areas, while cadres were to be trained in the urban areas prior to going into the countryside. The Party adhered to Mao's theory of "encircling the cities from the countryside", i.e. first occupying the rural areas so as to establish bases, then later seizing the cities by force. The cadres

were to be neither conspicuous to the authorities nor suspected by the villagers. In the early stages, they were to live quietly, refraining from clandestine activities, The Communists intended to establish close contact with and learn from the masses, so as to exploit, to their own ends, their problems and grievances.

(In 1917 Lenin made use of the slogan, "Bread, Peace and Land" to rally popular support in usurping power, after which he did allocate land to the peasants as promised. But once firmly in power, he abolished private ownership of land, taking back the land previously allocated. Similarly, Mao successfully won support with his "Own your own land" slogan. It is ironical that the popular aspirations which the Communists effectively exploit in their propaganda are contradictory to basic Communist objectives.)

The Communists employ a variety of propaganda tactics. Their regular theme is denunciation of the authorities as enemies of the people. Using this line, they seek to lure the people into participating in the Communist-sponsored "front" or "mass" organizations. Once they succeed in dominating the masses in a certain area, they extend propaganda activities to other localities.

The major objectives of Communist propaganda against Thailand are:

- to publicize CPT policy.
- to impress upon the Thai people the alleged immensity of the Communist operations.
- to pave the way for Communist elements in their approach towards rallying the masses in rural areas, especially in the villages.

There are four main categories of Communist propaganda against the Thai Government:

A. *Radio broadcasts:* Radio stations which regularly attack the Government are: *Voice of the People of Thailand* (clandestine), *Radio Hanoi, Radio Peking, Radio Moscow, Radio Pathet Lao* (clandestine), and several more, including the *Voice of the National United Front of Kampuchea* (the clandestine propaganda organ of exiled Prince Sihanouk of the Khmer Republic). These stations present damaging, often malicious reports and features about Thailand. Besides publicizing Communist activities, their usual themes range from attacks on the administration in general to specific cases of alleged grievances among the public, including agitation among labour groups, farmers, functionaries, and minority groups such as the hilltribes.

B. *Propaganda materials for purposes of intimidation and persuasion:* A large amount of neatly-printed documents, signed by so-called "Thai Patriots", are distributed through the mail. Intimidating, type-written letters are addressed by name to senior officials. Low-ranking officials and students frequently receive letters accusing the authorities of malpractices.

Many roughly printed or hand-written propaganda leaflets are distributed at the village level. The CTs post these documents in certain places, such as the house of a village headman, a market place, a temple, and on roadside trees. The statements usually contain threats to officials or to those failing to collaborate with the Communists, as well as attacks on government administration. This type of propaganda material is intended to focus attention on the activities of the CTs, while leaving open the possibility that the CTs may be coming into or near the villages. Once this is done, the way is paved for the CTs to infiltrate such villages and to intimidate villagers to withhold information or co-operation from the authorities.

C. *Armed propaganda:* This has been used by the Communists in Vietnam. The CTs often employ the technique in remote areas, where the authorities are still unable to provide unremitting protection. Basically, "armed propaganda" calls for the CTs to encircle a village and force the inhabitants to assemble and listen to their harangues. It is employed to recruit villagers for training, to obtain provisions and for political indoctrination, as well as to provide on-the-spot training in the use of weapons.

D. *Propaganda by infiltration:* Communist elements or agents are sent into a village to establish initial contacts. Criteria for the selection of propaganda agents may vary from one locality to another. Some are chosen because they have relations in a particular area. Others may simply move into an area to seek employment or to establish a business. Groups and associations may also be formed, ostensibly as mutual aid ventures.

The CTs normally resort to infiltration to build up new acquaintances whom they seek to mislead by stimulating hopes and expectations. Bunkong Toemsuk, for example, was duped by the CTs into undergoing indoctrination and training at both Vinh and Hoa Binh in North Vietnam. He finally turned himself over to the authorities, and gave this account:

> Originally from Thap Moei village in Ubon Ratchathani Province, Bunkong had had an ardent wish to become a medical student. In 1964, he was approached and befriended by a CT agent who convinced him that it would be impossible for the poor in Thailand to take up medical studies which were described by the agent as being exclusive to the rich. Bunkong was told that there was a possibility of entering that course by going abroad, a suggestion which Bunkong readily seized upon. The truth did not dawn on him until he started to receive weapons training at Vinh for three months, and by then it was too late. Bunkong was sent for further training at Hoa Binh for another six months before he was returned to Thailand by way of Nakhon Phanom Province. He worked with the CTs for a year.....
>
> Bunkong revealed that many of his friends were also duped by the CT agents into "going abroad to study".

Armed propaganda and propaganda by infiltration are commonly employed in Thailand by the CTs, although manifestations may differ from time to time and from area to area.

* * * * * *

CONCLUSION

SINCE 1961 the policy of the CPT has shifted from "peaceful struggle" to "revolutionary armed struggle" in line with Mao Tsetung's revolutionary theory of "using the countryside to encircle the cities and seizing political power by armed force". Accordingly, the Communists have clandestinely set up many front organizations in isolated rural areas. Significantly, two of these, the "Thailand Patriotic Front" and the "Thailand Independence Movement", have established the "office of the representative abroad" in the People's Republic of China, and have infiltrated small units, committeemen, or members into Thailand to carry out subversive activities. It is believed that at present these Communist front organizations continue to exist in the Bangkok/Thon Buri metropolitan areas and various provincial towns. But their activities have been rather restricted and are carried on in utmost secrecy.

At the local level, the CPT normally sets up organizations in accordance with prevailing local conditions. The Communists main aim is to "organize the masses" into typical "people's" or "patriotic" front organizations. Such Communist-promoted fronts may be either temporary or permanent, while some are mere "paper organizations" whose fictitious names are used by Communist media for propaganda purposes as well as facades to confuse government anti-Communist measures.

The Communist-sponsored fronts are formed to promote Communist aims, but their membership is mostly non-Communist, and their announced objectives have no apparent link with Communism. They use the desires, grievances, ambitions and needs of groups of people to advance the purposes of Communism. The exploited think they are pursuing their own objectives, unaware that they are advancing Communism.

External assistance for the Thai insurgents consists mainly of training and indoctrination, political and moral support, weapons and ammunition, and other equipment. Communists outside the country have also on many occasions infiltrated personnel into Thailand to perform special or technical tasks, such as armed propaganda by North Vietnamese troops among the hilltribes in northern Nan province and the sapper attacks by commando teams on air bases in the north-east.

Although the CPT has exploited their social and economic problems, the minority groups do not constitute the foundation of the insurgency. The Communists immediate target is the ethnic Thai and the success or failure of the insurgent activities will be dependent upon the CPT's ability to subvert and influence them. Currently, the so-called "armed struggle" under CPT leadership is initiated in a remote village and then gradually spreads to nearby village communities. The Communists exploit such factors as the variety of ethnic groupings and religious differences to recruit villages as insurgents or supporters.

The CPT is organizing its apparatus and "armed

forces" by influencing the civil population through propaganda and guerrilla warfare. Its operational areas, however, are no longer limited to the mountains but have spread into some lowland villages. The Government must intercept the militant insurgents and carry out offensive operations to root out the CTs as well as destroying the CPT organization, through a combination of political and military measures.

Most former CTs who have surrendered or been captured are beginning new lives within Thai society through the *Karunyathep* (God of Mercy) programme. This is being carried out at various rehabilitation centres, where disillusioned insurgents are given occupational training as well as adequate security and protection. The authorities assist those who do not wish to return to their former homes and relocate them elsewhere. In addition, upon release they are given safe conduct and assured of their own and their families' safety.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Also known as the "Indo-Chinese Communist Party"—the name was adopted in October 1930 by the Vietnamese Communists so that Laos and Cambodia could be included in the Party's sphere of activity.
2. The date of the meeting, 1 December 1942, has since been regarded by the present-day Communist Party of Thailand as its official foundation date.
3. This is a new title. Before 1 January 1969 they had been called the "Thai People's Armed Forces". The introduction of the word "Liberation" is significant in the context of the much-used term "war of national liberation".
4. The Lao People's Party or Phak Pasason Lao has the Pathet Lao movement and the Neo Lao Hak Xat as its military and political organizations, respectively.
5. The Communist Party of Malaya is the political arm of the Communist Terrorist Organization, which is operating in the Thai-Malaysia border area.
6. For example: Charoen Wannawat, captured 21 January 1967, who had studied at the Marxist-Leninist Institute in Peking from 1951 to 1957, when he returned to Thailand; Somsak Kiatsangwon, captured on 31 August 1967, who had studied at Peking and Chungking between 1950 and 1957; two CPT Politburo members, Charoen Wannangam and Wirat Angkhathawon, are also known to have studied in Peking.
7. For example: Laoying sae Li, who defected in Chiang Rai Province on 19 June 1972. Laoying is a Meo tribesman in his twenties, born in Yunnan Province, south-west China. His story after his defection revealed that in mid-1970, a group of 30 soldiers who had been recruited from the 11th PLA (People's Liberation Army—the army of Communist China) arrived at Phu Wae in Pua District of Nan Province. They were the first of thee groups, totalling 200, trained at Menghai in China's Yunnan Province in the period April-August 1971. In late August, all three groups travelled by motor vehicles from Menghai to Mengla, from where they headed south across the Lao border and subsequently took Route 46 (under construction by the Chinese Communists) towards Pak Beng on the Mekong river. However they travelled the road only as far as it went in late August 1971. From there they continued their journey on foot for three days to the Mekong river.

   After crossing the river, they went to "Office 95", a CPT operational headquarters in Sayaboury Province, located close to the northern boundary of Nan Province in Thailand and believed to be responsible for the Communists' operations in Nan and Chiang Rai Provinces. Following a 30-day

rest at "Office 95", they were eventually led across the Thai-Lao border at Pua District, Nan Province, heading for a CT stronghold at Phu Wae. All three groups arrived at Phu Wae by about mid-October, and Laoying's group of 30 soldiers quickly moved on to the Doi Pha Chi area, arriving there about late October. The entire trip from Menghai took them approximately two months.

According to Laoying, another group of about 120 soldiers stayed at Phu Wae, while some 50 were to be sent to the tri-province area of Loei, Phitsanulok, and Phetchabun Provinces. He added that although they were PLA soldiers, nearly all of them are from minority tribes inhabiting China's southern border regions, such as Meo, Yao, Kha Mu, Lahu, and Wa. In this respect they have much in common with similar tribal groups that dwell in this part of South-east Asia.

Since their arrival in Doi Pha Chi, Laoying's group have been integrated into CT squads along with regular members of the TPLAF. Although some have given military training to new recruits this has apparently not been their primary function. The former PLA cadres are now for all intents and purposes Thai Communist insurgents. In fact, they were told before they left China that they were going permanently to help their fellow revolutionaries in Thailand. They carry out armed propaganda activities and go on missions against government security forces, with one ex-PLA soldier accompanying each of these missions. Laoying himself also participated in several resupply missions to Laos and back. His information confirmed a number of rumours concerning the presence of Chinese Communist forces reported since early 1972.

Laoying said that he was recruited in 1969 into a Border Defence Army which was upgraded to the 11th PLA Army in December of that year. During the three-year period before his defection, he became increasingly concerned for his future and security. While serving in Thailand he suffered many privations, and, in addition, the CPT leadership objected to his love life while he was still fighting. He finally defected to the Thai military authorities in Chiang Kham District of Chiang Rai Province in June 1972.

8.9.10. Full case studies are included in the text of the White Paper.

WARFARE: "Unconventional warfare" (UW) has been the most prevalent type of warfare in the world in recent years—and also the least understood.

On defining and categorizing unconventional warfare

Jay Mallin

LACK of understanding of unconventional warfare has been characteristic not only of lay persons but also of much of the military, evidently because doctrinal concepts regarding this form of warfare have not yet—with sparse exceptions—been laid down by military thinkers. There are theories regarding rural guerrilla warfare, but this is only one aspect of unconventional warfare. Traditional military men accept rural guerrilla warfare as being within the military sphere only grudgingly, and there are other facets of unconventional warfare that the military are quite reluctant to consider as belonging within the range of military action. A glaring example of this is terrorism. Little, if anything, has been written by professional military men about countering terrorism. Nevertheless the handling of terrorism has fallen to the military in a number of areas where the police have been unable to cope with it. Notable incidents of this have occurred in Ireland and Uruguay.

One reason that UW—unconventional warfare—is so little understood is that there appears to be no clear concept of just what it encompasses. Research through the literature fails to uncover a satisfactory definition of what UW is in modern times; that is, where it lies in terms of modern warfare.

A Dictionary of Modern War, by Edward Luttwak, published in 1971, does not even list "unconventional warfare." It does define "conventional warfare" as "an inadequate term for any non-nuclear conflict." Therefore, presumably, by this definition unconventional warfare is "nuclear conflict." Equating UW with nuclear war, however, is to give it too narrow a meaning. Under this definition guerrilla warfare would be excluded and considered conventional, a categorization which no military theorist would consider valid.

The Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms published by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1972 provides the following definition of unconventional warfare:

> Includes the three interrelated fields of guerrilla warfare, evasion and escape, and subversion. Unconventional warfare operations are conducted within enemy or enemy-controlled territory by predominantly indigenous personnel, usually supported and directed in varying degrees by an external source.

This definition includes "evasion and escape," which can hardly be considered a form of warfare; it is rather one of many tactics used in carrying out this type of combat. UW is not necessarily conducted by "indigenous personnel" (note Che Guevara and his Cubans in Bolivia). Nor is it necessarily "supported and directed" by outside sources (support from the exterior was minimal in the Algerian and Cuban guerrilla campaigns and outside direction was nil).

The Joint Chiefs' *Dictionary* also provides this definition of UW:

> General term used to describe operations conducted for military, political, or economical purposes within an area occupied by the enemy and making use of the local inhabitants and resources.

This appears closer to the point, but even then

this definition tells more what UW aims at than what it is.

A definition similar to the first in the JCS *Dictionary* was provided by Brig. Gen. William P. Yarborough in the May 1962 issue of *The Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. It was as follows:

> Unconventional warfare—itself part of the broader area known as special warfare—encompasses guerrilla warfare, escape and evasion, and conduct of subversion against hostile states during wartime.

Apart from the reference again to "escape and evasion," there is also the limitation that UW is directed "against hostile states during wartime." UW can be – and during recent years has been – practised by native insurgent groups within their own countries. An outside power may assist an insurgency (as North Vietnam aided the Viet Cong) but this is not a factor that is necessary so as to be able to categorize a struggle as unconventional. As for UW being a part of "special warfare," this is a term less clear than "unconventional warfare" (the Joint Chiefs don't even try to define it).

Franklin A. Lindsay, writing in the January 1962 issue of *Foreign Affairs,* stated:

> Unconventional warfare differs profoundly from warfare in which regular armies are openly engaged in combat. The objective of such conventional combat is to win control of a state by defeating the enemy's military forces in the field. In contrast, the strategy of unconventional forces must be to win control of the state by first winning control of the civil population....

This is an accurate statement of what unconventional warfare seeks to accomplish; it does not, however, tell what UW is. Raymond L. Garthoff, in the July 1962 issue of *Foreign Affairs,* commented, "unconventional warfare has become all too conventional, even if it is not yet adequately understood." Unfortunately, unconventional warfare, a dozen years and several wars later, still is not understood.

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THIS writer takes the plunge and offers a definition:

> *Unconventional warfare is armed and psychological war waged by a native or foreign insurgent group, operating within a country or wholly or partially from foreign bases, which utilizes speed and concealment and relies heavily on bravery, stamina and ingenuity to combat an enemy enjoying greater numbers and/or superior weapons and general territorial and population control.*

This definition is founded on these facts: Insurgents may operate entirely within a country or at least partially from cross-boundary bases. The foreign "base" may be nothing more than a supply source; most rural and urban guerrilla campaigns of recent years have received at least a measure of material assistance from abroad. Concealment and swiftness of action are essential elements of guerrilla operations. The human factor—bravery, stamina and ingenuity—is especially important when a small group is fighting a foe that is superior by traditional military standards. UW is the weapon of the armed minority, a minority possibly supported clandestinely by an unarmed majority which is under the police control of the superior military power. Once the minority grows strong enough to confront the enemy on the battlefield in frontal combat—the "third stage" of rural guerrilla warfare—the war becomes largely conventional. Except peripherally there is little need for UW.

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IT is necessary not only to define unconventional warfare but also to categorize it. Specifically, what portion of the spectrum of warfare today does it occupy? To consider UW as being synonymous with "guerrilla warfare" is to limit the definition unduly, unless guerrilla warfare is understood to include both rural and urban guerrilla combat. On the other hand, to include nuclear warfare within the scope of unconventional warfare is to provide so large a range to UW as to make the term virtually meaningless. The ill-shod guerrilla firing an antique weapon in a

jungle can hardly be equated with the soldier deep in a concrete shelter pushing buttons to send huge missiles streaking thousands of miles through the atmosphere. Furthermore, the point can be raised whether nuclear warfare is in a general sense unconventional any longer. The military forces of all the major powers are now equipped with tactical and strategic nuclear weapons. Nuclear weaponry would appear logically to be the highest technical development of conventional warfare.

The type of warfare waged by a nation or an insurgent group is determined by many factors, fundamental among which are available human and material resources, comparative sizes of the opposing forces, and types of equipment which these forces possess. The nation with limited resources will strive for a quick victory; the insurgents with limited strength will burrow in and try to survive for a long struggle of attrition. The nation with a strong air force and weak army will attempt to knock out or cripple its enemy through air strikes. The insurgents with few weapons but access to ample explosives will conduct a campaign of sabotage and terrorism.

The type of warfare utilized is, therefore, largely a matter of relative strength. Manpower, equipment, training, discipline, organization and leadership of military forces, plus a nation's raw resources, human and material—all these add up to strength. So do less tangible factors, such as the will of a civilian population to support a war or an insurgent campaign.

Political factors—particularly within the realm of international relations—may also help determine the type of warfare that a nation will wage. For years North Vietnam fought South Vietnam by infiltrating troops into that country, preferring not to participate in the overt aggression of an all-out frontal attack. Similarly, for over a dozen years Cuba has carried out a campaign of unconventional warfare against other Latin American countries, including the infiltration of trained urban and rural guerrilla fighters. Never once, however, have Cuban forces been involved in an open and direct attack on another country.

Prudence can be another factor affecting the nature of a conflict. War might break out between two nations having nuclear capabilities, but neither might want to use its nuclear weapons, fearing corresponding reprisals from its foe. Conceivably the outcome of the conflict would be determined by conventional forces using conventional weapons, or limited to using tactical nuclear weapons on battlefields but not against population centres.

Thus the determinants of the nature of a conflict are the factor of strength (human and material), the factor of international politics, and the factor of fear of reprisals. A nation or an insurgent group picks a level of intensity of conflict which it believes best suits its capability and its cause. It then seeks to increase this intensity to the point that victory is achieved.

In terms of intensity the spectrum of modern warfare can be depicted as follows:

Unconventional	Conventional	Nuclear

If one wishes to detail the component possibilities of these three basic categories in terms of ascending equipment and sophistication, the chart takes this form:

Unconventional	Conventional	Nuclear
Urban guerrilla	Air strategic	Air strategic
Rural guerrilla	Air tactical	Air tactical
	Airborne	Land tactical
	Seaborne	
	Land mobile	
	Trench	

Unconventional warfare functions fundamentally in two geographical arenas:

Rural guerrilla operations in the hinterlands of a country. This type of warfare dates back to biblical times.

Urban guerrilla operations in a country's cities and towns. This form of combat dates only from the beginnings of genuine political conflict—not mere social politicking—in cities. Urban guerrilla warfare does not appear to go further back than the struggles against the Tzars of Russia early in this century. The increasing complexity of equipment and life in general in cities makes cities increasingly vulnerable to attack by urban guerrillas.

Phosphorous slipped into a downtown letter box can affect a dozen companies that have placed important letters in that box. Computers, aqueducts, generators, vehicles, telephone exchanges—all can be sabotaged.

The basic tactic of unconventional warfare in city or field is: strike swiftly against a vulnerable point of your foe and then disappear quickly. The guerrilla group attacking an army patrol in an isolated rural area is following the same tactic as the urban sniper who fires at a police car on a city street. The rural guerrilla who blows up an oil pipeline is disrupting the life and economy of a nation just as is the urban guerrilla who destroys an important water or electrical conduit. The rural guerrilla killing a village chief is striking at the nation's administrative system just as is the urban guerrilla who assassinates a policeman or a government official. The tactic is the same; only the site is different. In most cases insurgent groups fight in both the cities and rural areas of a country. The emphasis placed on each area is determined by local conditions.

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Unconventional warfare, in its broadest sense, also encompasses activities peripheral to the actual fighting. Some forms of propaganda are quite conventional (leaflet drops, propaganda beamed via radio, and so on). Other methods are unconventional: distribution of clandestine publications, broadcasts from secret radio transmitters, sparking and spreading of rumours of insurgent victories and government defeats and losses.

UW places a premium on "dirty tricks," more formally known as "special operations." Dirty tricks may be undertaken concurrently with conventional or unconventional military campaigns. By their very nature, however, they are unconventional and depend mainly on ingenuity. Maj. Gen. Edward Geary Lansdale (ret.), himself known as the "father of American unconventional warfare," has related in his book *In the Midst of Wars* a tactic used by Communist guerrillas in Vietnam:

> ....One group of guerrillas would fake a noisy attack on a village, to lure the Civil Guard police out of their outpost. When the police rushed to help the village, another group of guerrillas would move in on the outpost, murdering the women and children left there. It was a brutal Pavlovian lesson, conditioning the Civil Guard not to go to the aid of villagers but to stay and guard their families in the outposts. With no Civil Guard protectors, the villagers become easy prey for the guerrillas.

Guerrillas rely on courage, stamina and ingenuity—and ruthlessness, also—to compensate for the equipment and manpower they do not have. These are essential factors in conventional warfare, too. In unconventional warfare, however, they are *the* essence.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Sir Alan Watt is a former Australian Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., Japan and the German Federal Republic and, between ambassadorial appointments served as Secretary (Permanent Head) of the Department of External Affairs (1950-54) and Australian Commissioner for South-East Asia, based in Singapore (1954-56). He retired from the Diplomatic Service in 1962. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian National University and was Director of the Australian Institute of International Affairs from 1963 to 1969. His published works include *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy, 1938 - 65, Vietnam An Australian Analysis,* and *Australian Diplomat* (Memoirs).

Dr. Justus M. van der Kroef is Professor and Chairman, Department of Political Science, University of Bridgeport, Connecticut, U.S.A. He has written many books and monographs on South-East Asia.

Richard H. Eney is Chief of the Land Reform, Reconstruction and Resettlement Office/ Consulate General Region 4, Republic of Vietnam.

Jay Mallin is a journalist and author specializing in military affairs. He has reported the Cuban revolution, the Dominican civil war, the Guevara Movement in Bolivia, the war in Vietnam and the Tupamaros campaign in Uruguay. He is editor of the Series on Unconventional Warfare published by the University of Miami Press. □

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